



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTIETH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 11 April 2018

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson) took the chair at 12 noon, acknowledged country and read prayers.

VISITORS — PYEONGCHANG WINTER GAMES OLYMPIANS AND PARALYMPIANS

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): I would like to welcome four Western Australian competitors from the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. We have Shaun Pianta, a para-alpine skier; Lucas Mata, a bobsleigh athlete; Sean Pollard, a para-snowboarder; and David Mari, a bobsleigh athlete. Welcome.

[Applause.]

COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRES

Petition

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore) [12.02 pm]: I have a petition that has been adjudged to be conforming with the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly. It contains 270 signatures from people in the Dongara area. It is couched in the following terms —

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, say that Community Resource Centres provide a vital service to regional communities, including access to government services, technology, professional services. They provide opportunity for employment and training and partner with community organisations to attract further funding to enhance the communities they are part of. These centres have evolved beyond simply providing access to technology and are considered by communities to be an essential service in regional WA.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia to call on Premier Mark McGowan to ensure adequate funding to support the ongoing operation of all CRCs, without reducing their capacity to deliver services.

[See petition 77.]

PAPERS TABLED

Papers were tabled and ordered to lie upon the table of the house.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMMISSION — REVIEW

Statement by Minister for Public Sector Management

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Minister for Public Sector Management) [12.03 pm]: I rise to inform the house that the government will be undertaking an independent review of the functions, structure, performance and capability of the Public Sector Commission. This review will provide an opportunity to ensure that the PSC has the capacity, capability and resources to fulfil its role as a central agency. The recent service priority review concluded that long-term reform of the public sector could be achieved only with the support of strong, contemporary central agencies, recommending their capacity is strengthened to take on a sector stewardship role. The review identified a need for the commission to increase its level of engagement with the sector and provide greater expertise and leadership in workforce-related matters. Independent consultant and University of Canberra Adjunct Professor Carmel McGregor, PSM, will conduct the review with support from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Ms McGregor, also a former Deputy Australian Public Service Commissioner and member of the Prime Minister's Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration, will consult with PSC staff and stakeholders, including the opposition, and examine whether legislative changes are necessary to support long-term reform.

The Public Sector Commission is central to maintaining high standards of performance, integrity and accountability across the sector, and is also responsible for promoting workforce diversity, innovation and quality services. The McGowan government is committed to creating a more efficient, collaborative, accountable and high-performing public sector, and I am confident that this review will assist us to achieve better outcomes for all Western Australians.

RECOVERY COLLEGE MODEL*Statement by Minister for Mental Health*

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Mental Health) [12.05 pm]: I rise to inform members of the house that the McGowan government, as part of its recovery college election commitment, has appointed an expert panel made up of members with various backgrounds in mental health, alcohol and other drug services to progress the development of a recovery college model for Western Australia.

A Western Australian recovery college will complement existing mental health, alcohol and other drug support services by delivering self-directed recovery and learning opportunities in a safe and welcoming environment. The model will aim to help an individual's recovery through an education-based platform and by reducing stigma related to mental health, alcohol and other drug issues. The panel will be co-chaired by Mr Joe Calleja, the former CEO of Richmond Wellbeing, and Ms Tandi Kuwana, a registered mental health nurse. Both have over 10 years' experience working in the mental health sector. Together they will oversee the development of the recovery college model of service for Western Australia in conjunction with stakeholders, including the Mental Health Commission. I expect that the expert panel and development process will drive change and fresh thinking into a new recovery college model of service for Western Australia.

As a state government, we are committed to providing more options to individuals experiencing mental health and co-occurring alcohol and other drug issues. The Mental Health Commission has hosted four community information sessions, with the last of those sessions occurring today. For more information, visit mhc.wa.gov.au/recoverycolleges.

PYEONGCHANG WINTER GAMES OLYMPIANS AND PARALYMPIANS*Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation*

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [12.07 pm]: I rise to acknowledge the Western Australian competitors from the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, four out of five of whom are seated in the gallery. We have Shaun Pianta, here from Collie, who lost his vision from a Bali superbug. Shaun is one of the best para-alpine skiers in the world, and is certainly another in a long line of fantastic athletes from Collie. With a couple of broken legs along the way, it shows they are made pretty tough in Collie. We have Lucas Mata, from Perth, a former state level sprinter who has now made his name competing in the bobsleigh event. Lucas has taken a day off work as a physical education teacher to be here today, for which we are very grateful. We have Sean Pollard, a para-snowboarder who became a double-limb amputee after a shark attack while surfing. He was determined to keep an active lifestyle and is already a Paralympic athlete after first competing in the sport only in 2015. We also have David Mari, who formed a dynamic bobsleigh duo with Lucas. He started as a gymnast, was then a basketballer, and then a sprinter when he met Lucas and began his journey to the Olympics. He is a transformative athlete who embodies True Sport values. Jessica Yeaton, a Perth-raised cross-country skier, was unable to make it here today as her training base is somewhere with a little bit more snow than Perth.

It is an incredible privilege to have the opportunity to meet with these incredible athletes and thank them for representing both our state and our nation. I would like to acknowledge the years of hard work involved in making it to the Olympics—the pinnacle of competition in sport—and the determination and commitment shown by these athletes, and their support networks, family, coaches and friends. On behalf of the Western Australian government, I thank you for doing our state proud and congratulations again on your remarkable achievements.

[Applause.]

TOURISM — ABORIGINAL LANDS CAMPGROUNDS NETWORK — NORTH WEST*Statement by Minister for Tourism*

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Tourism) [12.10 pm]: I wish to inform the house about an exciting initiative delivered by Tourism Western Australia to create a network of campgrounds on Aboriginal lands across the north west. Last week, I officially opened Western Australia's third Camping with Custodians site, and the first in the Pilbara region, at Peedamulla Station near Onslow. Peedamulla is a 220 000 hectare Aboriginal-owned pastoral station that extends from the North West Coastal Highway to the coast. The campground, which will operate from March to November each year, comprises 20 camping sites, five of which have power and water. It offers hot showers and flushing toilets, a barbecue shelter with gas-fired hotplates, a communal fire pit, and a lawn area.

The Camping with Custodians initiative is an Australia-first program that gives visitors the opportunity to camp on Aboriginal land with quality facilities, and to meet and mix with local Aboriginal people, knowing that the proceeds of their visit will remain in the community. For participating communities, Camping with Custodians helps improve the engagement of Indigenous Western Australians in the tourism industry, providing enterprise, jobs and training opportunities. It also helps Indigenous Western Australians showcase local lifestyle and culture, as well as develop and deliver a range of tourism offerings such as tours, art sales and story-telling activities.

Imintji campground and the Jarlarloo Riwi Mimbi campground in the Kimberley region were the first two Camping with Custodians sites, which I opened in July last year. A fourth site is currently being developed at Violet Valley in the East Kimberley. The new campground has put Peedamulla on the tourist map and created a new destination for self-drive visitors passing through the Pilbara. It is now one of 20 businesses in the state government's Aboriginal tourism development program, administered by the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council, which is receiving government support to help strengthen its operations, marketing and customer service delivery.

Tourism WA research shows that 78 per cent of visitors to Western Australia in 2016–17 expressed an interest in Aboriginal tourism; however, only 21 per cent experienced it. There is a great opportunity to capitalise on the strong interest in Aboriginal tourism, and the state government is working on a number of initiatives, including expanding Camping with Custodians, to help grow the sector in the state. Aboriginal tourism is an economic driver, currently contributing \$43.8 million to the Western Australian economy and supporting 339 full-time equivalent jobs. The McGowan government is committed to maximising the sector's potential and it is an important part of our plan to create jobs, develop business opportunities and diversify the economy.

HOUSING — MICRO-LOT HOMES — ELLENBROOK

Statement by Minister for Housing

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee — Minister for Housing) [12.11 pm]: I rise to inform the house of an innovative trial of 11 micro-lot homes that was launched today in Ellenbrook, reflecting another aspect of the government's commitment to changing the way people live and interact in the city of Perth. The trial is the result of a collaboration between the state government, Now Living and the BGC group, and Ellenbrook, and is intended to challenge the traditional perception of a "family home". Compact housing on micro lots has been a success in other states and I believe it will be successful here also.

It is clear that the demographic of Western Australia's population is changing, along with its housing needs. The Housing Industry Forecast Group's 2017–18 report released in December last year found that there remains a significant shortage of affordable housing for Western Australians and noted a lack of diversity in Perth housing stock. As our population expands and ages in the coming years, there will be an increasing need for diverse and appropriate housing, and we need to make the best possible decisions to ensure that our land and infrastructure resources are utilised efficiently.

The McGowan government is aware of these issues, and its Metronet vision is designed to play an integral part in responding to the challenges of diversity and affordability. Metronet will provide access to decent, affordable and secure housing in vibrant communities, connected to jobs and transportation. As I am sure members are aware, the Ellenbrook line forms a central plank of the Metronet plan.

The specific designs for these micro lots offer affordable two and three-bedroom homes on green-title sites of under 100 square metres in size that will require minimal maintenance and provide an attractive alternative to apartment living. These Reveley Terrace micro lots offer great proximity to amenities, including transport and public open space, with attractive streetscapes, and, most importantly, at prices that make them accessible to a range of buyers starting at \$299 000.

The McGowan government has a proud track record in leading, partnering and supporting innovative developments that demonstrates new approaches to meeting the needs of a growing and diverse community. We are committed to working with private sector partners such as Now Living and the BGC group on projects such as this that increase housing diversity and the range of affordable choices.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — PRECEDENCE OF PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Standing Orders Suspension — Withdrawal of Notice

Notice of motion, given Tuesday, 10 April, withdrawn by **Mrs M.H. Roberts (Minister for Police)**, on behalf of the Leader of the House.

RAILWAY AND PORT (THE PILBARA INFRASTRUCTURE PTY LTD) AGREEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2018

Second Reading

Resumed from 21 March.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [12.14 pm]: I assume the Minister for Police is the responsible minister for this bill?

Mrs M.H. Roberts: It is the Premier and Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade. He will be back shortly.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Thank you.

The opposition will be supporting this bill, of course. This bill is a flow-on from an agreement between the government and Fortescue Metals Group Ltd to facilitate the continuation of Fortescue's iron ore operations in the

Pilbara. We know that one of the challenges with the iron ore industry is that iron ore companies always need to find additional ore bodies that they can extract and develop. This bill will enable that to take place. Some of Fortescue's existing ore bodies have a limited life, as is the case with most mines, and some will come to an end more imminently than others. Fortescue has found a new resource at Eliwana. In order to extract and export that resource, it needs to build a rail spur to that ore body. This agreement bill will provide authority under the Land Administration Act 1997 for Fortescue Metals Group to identify, map out and prepare the optimal route for the rail line to that ore body.

Rather than go into consideration in detail on this bill, I would like to put some questions to the Premier so that he can answer them in his reply to the second reading debate. That will expedite the passage of this legislation.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: I understand that your questions are being noted and that when the Premier comes into the chamber, he should be able to respond to them.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I hope the minister will relay those questions to the Premier.

One issue that will need to be resolved is native title. We understand there is a dispute between FMG and the Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation about native title issues related to the proposed rail spur. I assume those issues are yet to be addressed. Will the Yindjibarndi dispute affect the rail link to this ore body? There is some uncertainty about that. We have a press release from SBS that says it could impact on future land access arrangements in the area. I am not sure about the claimant areas.

The bill will also enable FMG to have access to crown land, excluding port land, to carry out site investigations and studies to enable development of the rail line. The bill also obliges FMG to prepare a local participation plan. Is that local participation plan part of the Western Australian Jobs Bill that was passed by Parliament last year; and, if not, is it different? I notice some of the wording is different. The Western Australian Jobs Bill refers to local industry, which means suppliers of goods produced, or services provided, in Western Australia, another state, territory or New Zealand, whereas the specification in this bill is not local industry, but Western Australian industry. Is it more specific than the local jobs bill; and, if so, why? I understand that the reason that local industry is defined as it is in the jobs bill is that otherwise it would violate numerous trade and intergovernmental agreements between the states and would probably run into constitutional issues. Is there some reason we can be more specific in specifying Western Australian industry in this bill and not run into those same constitutional and legal problems, and what is it? Also, what is meant by "Western Australian"? I do not think local content is going to be a major issue for Fortescue Metals Group in this, but we are not arguing against having either a local participation or local content requirement. Most of these developments in the past have essentially been through the same process. However, is this the first time it has been embedded into an agreement? Sometimes these agreement acts can be inflexible; they are very specific. Is a local participation scheme going to be put into it? What are some of the criteria that will be used to specify the local participation scheme in the bill? I might be wrong, but my reading is that this is probably the first time it has been put into an agreement act. I think it is a positive step, but I would like to know some of the policy and specificity behind it. I note that in the second reading speech the minister referred to a local participation plan—an obligation for the government to prepare a plan and implement it to provide local industry participation benefits. The bill goes beyond that and requires FMG, both directly and through its subsidiaries or agents, to provide jobs for Western Australian industries, so it is much more specific than the jobs bill. I want to know what the difference is between the Western Australian industry participation plan in the jobs bill and its implementation in this agreement. My understanding is that there is a potential in agreements, because the agreements are between two parties—the government of Western Australia and FMG or its subsidiaries or parties—and those agreements are not as subject to constitutional challenge as a bill or an act of state such as the jobs bill. Perhaps that allows the agreements with the government to be more specific in clearly specifying that the local industry, as referred to in the participation plan, is actually based in Western Australia, whereas that was not able to be done in the Western Australian Jobs Bill. I would like some discussion on that in the minister's reply to the second reading debate; otherwise, we will have to go into consideration in detail.

The opposition of course will support the agreement. It needs to have gone through this Parliament by September this year and I am confident that, as long as the government expedites the bill in the upper house, which it has struggled to do with many bills so far in this term of government, it will get through quite easily. FMG is one of our great success stories in Western Australia. It is a firm that is about 15 years old this year. It employs nearly 4 000 people. It sprang up from a thought of "Twiggy" Forrest and became a third force in the iron ore industry in the Pilbara and one of the largest exporters in Australia, let alone Western Australia. It has done a remarkable job in that it came to the fore when it faced difficulties competing against the giants of Rio Tinto, BHP and Vale, which really did not want another force coming in. FMG was able to do that when the cost and difficulties of acquiring the infrastructure and people and building the facilities necessary were horrendous. It had to then get funding for it and find markets, mainly in China, and took on huge amounts of debt. I think it peaked at nearly \$11 billion or more, which was a huge amount of debt for a single commodity-based business. Usually, they do not have very much debt and cannot get it. Throughout its history, it has been able to meet not only its targets,

with its first production in 2008, but also its target of maximum production of, I think, 160 million tonnes a year. It has not only been able to reduce its debt levels to a very manageable level of \$2 billion to \$3 billion, but also become the lowest cost producer of iron ore in Western Australia. That is remarkable. Its costs of production have come down by nearly 70 per cent since 2008. It has some real challenges, because its ore bodies are not of the same iron ore content as those of Rio, BHP and Vale—Vale's is higher. As a result, it gets a substantial discount in the Chinese market. Rumours from the newspapers are that the discount is getting larger. China is giving a higher premium for higher iron ore content and therefore any differentiation in that or any lower iron ore content gets a heavy discount. That means that FMG has to make the treadmill go even quicker in the sense that it has to work harder and get its costs down lower. Some of its ore bodies are not as deep, rich and longstanding as BHP's and Rio's, so it has to continually look for replacement ore bodies from its existing facilities. Given all those challenges it faces, it has done a remarkable job in creating itself, meeting those challenges, flourishing, employing 4 000 people and being one of the largest exporters. It has successfully overcome each one of its challenges. It is a remarkable Western Australian success story. It shows the absolute necessity to grow businesses of entrepreneurship and risk taking that have a go. When there is potential like this, we need people like Mr Forrest, Nev Power and the team at FMG to get on and develop a firm like this. We in Western Australia should be forever grateful to them for going out and doing this. With state responsibility in this agreement act, one of the bases for the success of Fortescue was the agreement underlying its projects—it expedited, reduced the risk and gave certainty. Indeed, I doubt that Fortescue would have got off the ground in the first place without an agreement act that provided the certainty needed. What we are doing here is amending it directly and indirectly to allow the great success story of FMG to continue by starting to plan to bring on a new ore body. In the past, even when Fortescue Metals Group was being built at the height of the liquefied natural gas boom that took place at the time, local content from FMG was pushing 80-plus per cent, and I am confident that any future exploration would be even higher than that. Even though local content in the iron ore industry and FMG is very high, it also emphasises hiring locals, specifically from the Aboriginal communities that are the native title holders or live around those mines, which is a great success story, driven by the chairman, Andrew Forrest. He has done a great job on that. But I think it is useful to have a local participation plan to provide clarity around the requirements that the Western Australian society and its agent, the government, have vis-a-vis hiring locals for this project. I do not anticipate any uncertainty or reluctance on the part of FMG in participating in a local participation plan. It is more than willing to do so anyway.

The opposition will support the bill, of course. I seek the Premier's response to some of the questions raised and I look forward to helping FMG in its great success story into the future by supporting this bill. I hope, into the future, it gets on and maps out an adequate, low-cost rail line, gets it built, and opens the new Eliwana mine.

MR W.R. MARMION (Nedlands) [12.31 pm]: I rise to make a few comments on the Railway and Port (The Pilbara Infrastructure Pty Ltd) Agreement Amendment Bill 2018, a very important amending bill on a state agreement act. To explain what we are doing, this legislation amends a current state agreement act that was enacted in 2004 and signed on behalf of the state by the then Premier, Hon Geoffrey Ian Gallop. That started a remarkable journey for a company known as Fortescue Metals Group. We have to congratulate the state for signing this agreement in 2004 and commend the Department of State Development and all the people involved in putting together this very complicated agreement of more than 90 pages. Today we are amending a current state agreement that was put in place by Hon Geoff Gallop in 2004, which in my view basically initiated the wonderful story of FMG. That is what we are about.

We all know, as the Leader of the Opposition said, that FMG is a great supporter of local jobs and local content. Indeed, it goes beyond that. As a hockey player, I have to say I am very pleased that it supports the Australian men's and women's hockey teams and hockey in Western Australia. It is a great community leader.

What is this bill about? As the Leader of the Opposition said, the source material for all mining companies eventually runs out because they are finite materials. FMG has quite a number of deposits, and this amending bill is about allowing it access to crown land to explore and define a route for a future railway line for another deposit. For any company, this is a procedure that will go on until its resource runs out, and we will run out of iron ore in Western Australia in about 600 years.

That is what we are about today. The obligations, from the state's point of view, are identified in clause 7, and they are to allow the company to go onto crown land—mainly pastoral leases—for the purposes of negotiating native title agreements, defining routes, and carrying out engineering and soil studies to define a cost-effective railway route for the new ore body and obviously link into the current rail infrastructure to transport the ore body through to Port Hedland.

In amending the state agreement, the government is taking the opportunity to incorporate participation plans into any new projects that FMG undertakes. We all know that FMG already has participation plans, but it is my understanding—the Premier can verify this—that this legislation will provide that future local participation plans are consistent with the ones already in place through more recent state agreements. I will be interested to hear the Premier's comments on the local participation plans. Indeed, it is defined quite specifically in the legislation that

“local industry participation benefits” means the use and training of labour available within the state; the use of the services of engineers, surveyors, architects and other professional consultants, experts, specialists, project managers and contractors available within the state; and the procurement of works, materials, plant, equipment and supplies from Western Australian suppliers, manufacturers and contractors. I will be interested to know the definition of “Western Australian suppliers”. I know from my own experience that FMG sources Western Australian suppliers probably all the time. Indeed, I am sure that that is its aim, but I would like to know that definition. As the Leader of the Opposition said, the so-called Western Australian Jobs Act has its own definition of “local content”. It is my understanding that “local content” in that context has a very broad meaning, greater than Western Australia. It will be very interesting to hear the reason for the difference between the definition of “local content” in this amendment bill and what it means in the Western Australian Jobs Act. As I understand it, within three months of delivering a plan to develop a mine and all the associated infrastructure around it, the company is obliged to prepare a participation plan. This legislation actually defines what the local content plan should entail. It has to be provided for approval by the minister. I will be interested to have that clarified by the Premier.

Another important aspect of this legislation is the use of a third party to make sure that opportunities to provide services to the new project are identified, advertised and distributed to potential suppliers. I will be interested to hear the Premier explain how that might work. I think it is a very good idea. I know that Chevron engaged someone I know very well; he did engineering with me. He was engaged full-time by Chevron to go to all the local suppliers and manufacturers in Western Australia to make sure that they were aware of the opportunities and of what Chevron’s requirements were to make sure that they could deliver services to a satisfactory standard. That is a very good initiative in this legislation.

I am conscious that the member for North West Central wants to speak to this bill, so I will see if there is anything else I wanted to raise. I conclude by acknowledging that this amendment bill could not have been put together by only the Premier. It was his staff in the Department of State Development, so I want to acknowledge —

Mr M. McGowan: I wrote it!

Mr W.R. MARMION: The Premier wrote it, he jokes. I acknowledge those staff members in the Department of State Development who were involved in writing this bill and negotiating with Fortescue Metals Group. I congratulate the new CEO of FMG, Elizabeth Gaines, who has taken over from Nev Power, who made FMG such a success story and drove down the production cost to a figure that is almost unbelievable. I understand it is \$19 a tonne.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Lower.

Mr W.R. MARMION: It is even lower than \$19 a tonne. I acknowledge Milka Klobucar, Sarah Kepert, Peter Kiossev and Paul Platt from the Department of State Development. They all work under the very good leadership of Steve Wood, who, unfortunately, I understand is leaving the government service. He is an asset who will be missed by many people. His depth of knowledge of state agreements is illustrated by the fact that we have been able to produce this very good amendment bill today. We support the bill and look forward to the continued success of Fortescue Metals Group.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [12.41 pm]: I rise on behalf of the National Party to also relay our support for the Railway and Port (The Pilbara Infrastructure Pty Ltd) Agreement Amendment Bill 2018. I cannot believe that the original agreement is from 2004. I remember being a candidate for the Mining and Pastoral Region and lobbying the then Minister for State Development, Clive Brown, who pushed this state agreement bill through Parliament in 2004. It has proved to be quite fruitful for WA in what Fortescue Metals Group has been able to achieve over that time and, more importantly, what has been put back into the community. In recent times, we have seen the fruits of the success of FMG and investment has occurred, particularly in my electorate.

This amendment bill is about the Eliwana project, which is 100 kilometres from Tom Price in my electorate. As I said, the investment by Andrew Forrest through the success of FMG is leading to what I think will be a boom in not only the resource sector in the Gascoyne, but also the tourism sector in Exmouth. Yesterday’s announcement about developing the largest rock oyster farm in the world in Carnarvon has the potential for 250 jobs to be based there. That is the success of FMG and the benefits it is delivering to the community. FMG is also growing the cattle industry through the purchase of several stations in the Gascoyne and developing Minderoo station. It is exciting. The success of FMG and the opportunities it is providing for the Gascoyne and the people in my electorate over the next few years are going to be huge and create a mining boom that the Pilbara will get to see but much of the rest of the state will not. The Gascoyne has a richness in agriculture, aquaculture and tourism.

This project is in my electorate and will provide more investment. It will cost about \$1.9 million to extend the spur railway line from Firetail to the new mine site, which will obviously lead to more jobs. As I think the Leader of the Opposition pointed out quite clearly, FMG’s predicament is in the quality of iron ore and how it can stay ahead of the game. Nev Power, as the former CEO, set up FMG to be a couple of steps ahead of the game. It is disappointing that here we are still talking about amending the state agreement. The Nationals would like to look

at state agreements and modernise them, like FMG's state agreement and unlike the state agreements of some other iron ore companies. FMG has the ability to have the best iron ore, have the market sewn up, and dictate price to the rest of the world. FMG has really stepped up and tried to be ahead of the game, as I think it has been, to combat the control and dominance of the two majors, Rio Tinto and BHP, in the iron ore market. Like I said, this bill amends a state agreement to allow for the continuation of the great Western Australian and Australian success story of FMG so that it can continue to achieve and provide benefits to my electorate in the Gascoyne. Through the University of Western Australia, Andrew Forrest has been able to take philanthropic actions to communities that need support.

Clause 9A, "Local participation plan", in the amendment bill will modernise the state agreement. The National Party has been fighting to modernise state agreements to make sure that state agreements keep pace with what is happening today. I think it is absolutely imperative for government, companies, the community, the state and the country that state agreements are modernised. This local participation plan, much like a community development plan, would be in the state agreement originally, but we see this new addition of a local participation plan. It sounds great. Its intent is good for local jobs and local procurement, but the problem is that we do not get to see the criteria. We do not get to see much. As with a community development plan, it is done in secret between the department, the minister and the company. My concern with clause 9A, "Local participation plan", is that there is no visibility to see the criteria, the benchmarks or the effect on the local communities of Tom Price, Paraburdoo or the Pilbara in general. More importantly, we do not know the benchmark or the criteria that allow small and large businesses in Western Australia to get the benefit of this new clause in the state agreement. I fully support the intent of amending and modernising a state agreement and having a local participation plan, but I would still like to know exactly what that is. As members of Parliament, we get the opportunity to scrutinise that to make sure that we negotiated the best deal possible in amending the state agreement. I know that when Labor was in opposition, it always said that we cannot amend state agreements unless we have agreement from the other side. I would like to know what agreement took place between FMG and the government to include this local participation plan in this bill to amend the state agreement. If there is no negotiation to include this, why can we not do that with other parts of state agreement acts such as special lease rental for argument's sake by perhaps increasing that to assist the state's finances by getting a little bit more from the two top producers, which are the two top producers of iron ore, compared to companies such as Fortescue Metals Group Ltd, which has to be innovative to keep pace with the rest of industry?

As I said, this is a must. I think it is urgent for the government to deal with it so that it will allow FMG to continue on its path of assessing the potential for that spur railway line to go through some tough country. Some huge engineering feats are needed to get the railway line through, recognising of course, that it has to run through various interests such as some of Rio's land. Also, there are obviously native title issues. I think three groups fall along this spur railway line.

Mr W.R. Marmion: Environmental issues.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Of course, there are also environmental issues. A lot of work has to be done to get that spur railway line agreed upon before that \$ 1.9 billion can be spent on developing the new mine site, which is integral to the state given that the state's economy relies on receiving royalties from the iron ore industry and therefore FMG is a large contributor to our state's finances.

A couple of things have been brought up and I think some media attention has been paid to the Windawarri–Gumula Aboriginal Corporation, the prescribed body corporate that holds the native title rights interest trust for the eastern Gumula people. I understand there are some issues around Spear Hill, where FMG has been in negotiations with the group for some time—I think close to 10 years—dealing with some issues of Aboriginal heritage. I think the media have been indicating concerns about the pathway. This Railway and Port (The Pilbara Infrastructure Pty Ltd) Agreement Amendment Bill does not grant that pathway; it grants the ability for FMG to start to map out where the train line will go. It does not provide all the approvals for it to go ahead. As I said, FMG has to overcome a lot of hurdles to get the okay to start that construction.

My understanding from discussions with FMG is that it has consulted with the native title groups under section 18 of the Native Title (State Provisions) Act 1999, and funded and facilitated many of the archaeological surveys that are needed in the area, remembering that the Solomon Hub is 90 per cent Windawarri–Gumula people, so FMG has a strong relationship with the group that has some concerns about some heritage areas. Obviously, FMG will do everything to avoid significant Aboriginal heritage places. It has done that before on the Solomon Hub and other areas of its operations throughout Western Australia. When Independent Heritage Consultants assessed a number of places in the area as being of low significance, about 50 places were under consideration that met the minimum requirements to be considered sites under the meaning of the Aboriginal Heritage Act. Out of those 50 places, 12 have been deemed necessary to negotiate. I am confident that FMG will come up with a good outcome with the Windawarri group to enable delivery of this project. There are always hurdles in the way but I am confident that FMG and the Windawarri group will come to an agreement to ensure that site is protected. FMG will even look at protecting a lot of rock art that is some distance away from the

railway line and its operations. I am confident that there will be an agreement on Aboriginal heritage with not just the Windawarri group but also the other two groups, as well as other third parties such as Rio, given that it will have to cross through some of the group's lease land.

All in all, the National Party is very supportive of this bill. As a local member, I am very supportive of FMG and what it has been able to deliver for my electorate and the people and the economy of Western Australia. More important, we need to celebrate the success of a Western Australian company and a Western Australian individual who is putting back the dividends from 2004, on a journey that has led to the investment that is occurring in my electorate, as I said, with the potential for the largest rock oyster farm and an increase in the cattle trade and pastoral stations as well as in tourism and horticulture, in light of what the Munderoo Group is embarking on in developing Munderoo station, and Brickhouse station in the expansion of the horticultural area in the Gascoyne and parts of the Pilbara. These are exciting times. Members all need to get on board and support companies like FMG that play a large part in providing royalties to the state. As I said, Premier, it would be nice to know the detail of the local participation rate in drafting this bill. It shows us that we can amend state agreement acts to suit the will of the government of the day, which is to include this participation plan. The will of Western Australians is to ensure that we can maximise local content being utilised from Western Australia. Why can we not do that with other outdated state agreement acts, which prevent us—the state government; Western Australians, who own the resource—from maximising our potential to earn as much money as we can on a finite resource, as the member for Nedlands said? Although it is some years away—some decades or maybe hundreds of years away—we need to continue to develop our state to realise its potential and we need those companies to play their role in budget repair.

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills) [12.58 pm]: I am very pleased to rise in support of this Railway and Port (The Pilbara Infrastructure Pty Ltd) Agreement Amendment Bill 2018 today. I have been quite close to the Fortescue Metals Group Ltd projects throughout the Pilbara. Over the course of my career, I worked on the original power supply arrangements and the asset developments for the port facilities and managed commercially over my career with Horizon Power the port power supply arrangements for FMG and TPI—The Pilbara Infrastructure—which facilitated the first phases of the projects we are now seeing. As others have observed, the principal state agreement act was signed in 2004 under the Gallop government. The minister at the time, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, was Hon Alannah MacTiernan, who now sits in the other place. After construction of the railway line first began in February 2007, the first ore was delivered in April 2008 on the “Alannah MacTiernan express”—a very exciting day for the diversity of iron ore projects in the Pilbara region. The timetable that FMG worked on then indicates that these projects tend to move on at a fair clip. FMG has now reached the position of the fourth largest iron ore producer in the Pilbara. It owns and operates three iron ore mines, 620 kilometres of the world's fastest heavy haul rail and five operating berths at the port. As I indicated before, I did a bit of work around the power supply for them. It exports around 70 million tonnes of iron ore per annum and has over 3 500 employees. The projects that FMG currently operates are based in the Chichester hub, which I had the great pleasure of visiting with a number of my Labor Party colleagues when I was a newly elected member of Parliament. We got to see in real time some of the innovations that FMG brings to its mining operations, with automation at the pit and the dramatic landscape in which those projects exist. I acknowledge the previous contributor's speech about the importance of recognising and preserving environmental and heritage values as these new projects are developed, which will undoubtedly be a part of this project's progression.

As others have mentioned, the Firetail deposit in the Solomon hub is now becoming depleted. FMG has cast around and looked for other opportunities and has decided on the Eliwana deposit to the west of the Solomon hub. It has identified 2.1 billion tonnes and is aiming for a 30 million tonnes per annum development with a 24-year mine life. It aims to commence production in 2020 with an investment of around \$1.9 billion in the rail and mine project. It will deliver around 200 jobs in the construction phase and then sustain The Pilbara Infrastructure and FMG's current operating workforce over the longer term. It will require 130 kilometres of additional railway infrastructure.

This bill intends to facilitate the development of that rail infrastructure. It will do that by doing several things. It will allow site investigations and studies for the rail spur to occur, which will produce detailed proposals that will be submitted to the minister as part of the usual application process. It also requires that FMG develop local participation plans and that third parties also develop local participation plans. According to the definition, the plans will cover the use and training of labour available within the said state, which will be Western Australia; the use of the services of engineers, surveyors, architects and other professional consultants, experts, specialists, project managers and contractors available within the state; and the procurement of works, materials, plant, equipment and supplies from Western Australian suppliers, manufacturers and contractors.

On the face of it, these two amendments to the principal 2004 agreement are relatively small but, nonetheless, they are very noteworthy for a number of reasons. Firstly, the initiation of this project is indicative of and, indeed, contributes to, the growing level of business confidence that we are seeing under this government. In November 2017, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia reported that the previous quarter had seen the largest rise in business confidence in the last three years. The announcement of this Eliwana railway project occurred at the same time in February 2018 that the CCI also reported the highest quarterly rise in business

confidence since the global financial crisis. These things have ripple effects. When companies such as FMG initiate expansions in capital expenditure, it signals to other businesses throughout the Western Australian economy that things are looking up and they can start to have increasing confidence in the economic management of the state by the McGowan Labor government. Secondly, it highlights the importance that this government places on including local content in major infrastructure spending. It reflects the underpinning philosophy of the Western Australian Jobs Act in that it has a local participation obligation and complements our focus on WA jobs for WA workers. Thirdly, this project also highlights the government's focus on supporting job-creating infrastructure projects more broadly, which is also evidenced by the announcement of Infrastructure WA, which will look at a 20-year state infrastructure strategy and signals the need for a strategic approach to planning and prioritising infrastructure projects. It will coordinate orderly and efficient infrastructure planning.

I observe that in the Pilbara, which I have a fairly long association with, where infrastructure has been developed it has been characterised by a lack of coordinated development, with quite a bit of asset duplication and ongoing access disputes. Criss-crossing the Pilbara are multiple transmission lines, railway lines and all sorts of asset classes. I understand the justifications that have been proffered by operators in the Pilbara about the need to duplicate these capital intensive assets and the issues and arguments for and against access to certain classes. However, I think some infrastructure classes, particularly energy, lend themselves to better coordination and offer scope for more economically efficient capital deployment and lower operating costs. Over the course of my career I have dealt with FMG on large-scale transmission projects into the Pilbara region and I have worked for companies that work with FMG on gas lateral and power station projects. Gas lateral multi-user infrastructure projects can deliver a substantial benefit to the whole region and really unlock that place. The key point is that open access common user infrastructure encourages smaller players to enter the market. There are opportunities for third-party investment in other classes of economic infrastructure. This will unlock additional opportunities in the Pilbara for a broader range of players. As business confidence increases, I hope to see a whole range of other types of player entering the market, developing a pipeline of projects to deliver additional local jobs.

It is great to see FMG's Eliwana project being initiated but we have to acknowledge that considerable value can be gained from enabling smaller scale operators to enter the market. It will deliver employment opportunities and broader benefits to the state.

The fourth noteworthy element of this project are the linkages to longer term opportunities and potential synergies with WA Labor's other great state building project—that is, Metronet. It is a longer term play, but, nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that this government has an economic growth development trajectory and a number of projects that will deliver synergies economy-wide. This project will obviously work to a pretty aggressive timetable. FMG hopes to achieve a final investment decision in late 2018 or early 2019. It needs to step through a number of approval processes that other speakers have alluded to. It is aiming for the first ore to be produced in 2020. I noted before that these projects tend to progress at a fair clip. It will create 200 construction opportunities, but over the longer term, associated with other rail projects that this state government will deliver, the McGowan Labor government intends to develop a service industry that is very synergistic with rolling stock and rail opportunities in the mining and agricultural sectors. WA Labor's Metronet plan includes a 15-year strategy to include 50 per cent locally manufactured railcars, which will create ongoing jobs and apprenticeships. Although the priority at the moment is passenger railcars for Metronet stage 1, cars for expanded services and replacement of the A series and replacement passenger carriages for the *Australind* train, thousands of railcars are servicing mining and agriculture sectors on a vast network of tracks and rolling stock that need to be upgraded and replaced. Making the investment in developing those capabilities in those workforces right now will support the agricultural and mining industries right across the state—throughout the goldfields and into the Pilbara—over the long term.

Victoria has taken a very proactive approach and has established an advanced railcar manufacturing industry. It has constructed 65 high-capacity metro trains. It aimed for 50 per cent local content and achieved 60 per cent local content, creating 1 100 jobs. On an ongoing basis, those skilled workers will be able to service the state's future rail needs. It is fantastic that the same sort of opportunities, if not more, are presented by the WA government's policies for manufacturing Metronet rolling stock here in Western Australia. We need to consider also that BHP's South Flank project and Rio Tinto's Koodaideri project will provide long-term opportunities to build on the capacity that will be delivered through the Metronet rail manufacturing project. No matter where we are in Australia and no matter what is being exported—iron ore in the Pilbara, copper in South Australia, pineapples from Queensland, dairy from Victoria—access to infrastructure is needed. In welcoming the state government's release of the blueprint for Infrastructure WA, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia noted —

Access to infrastructure is also fundamental to ensuring the whole community can contribute to, and share in, WA's wealth and quality of life.

Stable government is also needed to foster business confidence, promote local content and, through investment in projects like Metronet, support a whole new manufacturing pipeline. I look forward to observing this project's ongoing development and the economic development opportunities it presents for WA.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade) [1.11 pm] — in reply: I thank members for their support of the Railway and Port (The Pilbara Infrastructure Pty Ltd) Agreement Amendment Bill 2018. So that members fully understand, this bill provides the opportunity for Pilbara Infrastructure Pty Ltd, which is the vehicle used by Fortescue Metals Group Limited, to access land to carry out investigations for building a railway. The bill amends a state agreement act of 2004, the Railway and Port (The Pilbara Infrastructure Pty Ltd) Agreement 2004, which was passed when the Gallop government was in office. It will allow—not actually approve—FMG to investigate a 100-kilometre stretch between the existing Firetail mine and the proposed new Eliwana iron ore mine. The Firetail mine, which has been operational for 10 or 15 years and which may well have been the first mine in the FMG stable, is going to cease operations at some point in the future. The next deposit FMG wants to access is its Eliwana deposit to the south west of the Firetail mine. If it accesses that deposit, FMG will need a railway to ship its ore from the Eliwana deposit through to Firetail from where it joins its rail line through to Port Hedland for export. The bill essentially provides an opportunity for investigation of the land so that FMG can determine the best route to use and to determine engineering and structural issues to build a railway line through to the Eliwana site. By the normal standards of a state agreement, it is a relatively minor change to an existing state agreement because all it does is provide an opportunity for technical investigation by the company.

All this is done prior to native title, or an Indigenous land use agreement, being granted. FMG needs to work out the exact area the railway will need to use before it seeks native title and those discussions commence. There will be fairly unobtrusive and minor impacts on the land, or investigation of the land, in working out where to build the route, which will need to be carried out prior to other approvals being granted to build the railway.

On 13 March this year, I signed the state agreement—which is at the back of the bill—on behalf of the government, with representatives of Pilbara Infrastructure Pty Ltd and Fortescue Metals Group Ltd. A member asked whether we had an agreement with the company; and that, if we had, where it was. Members can look at the back of the bill to find the agreement. That answers that member's question.

I was also asked two predominant questions. One was in relation to native title processes with the parties involved. The native title processes that will need to be gone through on the land where the railway will go, as I said earlier, will occur subsequent to an investigation to work out what land the company actually needs. One thing will follow another. I am sure that those processes will be gone through—in fact, they have to be gone through—after FMG works out what land it will need. That is when that will happen.

Clearance is also required under the Aboriginal Heritage Act, but my department does not have visibility of those issues. Apparently, there has been some dispute about that process but it is running separately from this legislative process. A separate process governs those issues, both state and federally. I understand that there is some confidentiality around heritage surveys, and some discussion—or at least negotiation, perhaps even court action—is going on in relation to those things that is separate from this process. Through this bill we are attempting to amend the state agreement act to allow the company to investigate land, and all those other processes and approvals are separate from this. There is a separate range of issues before mining commences.

In 2010 and 2011, when I was shadow Minister for State Development, this house considered some state agreements. We constantly raised the issue of local participation plans. To his credit, the former Premier and then state development minister, Colin Barnett, agreed that that process would be followed in the future. From 2011 local participation plans have been included as a matter of course in state agreements. The department will negotiate with companies about what local participation plans will include, but they will largely outline the processes by which suppliers are made aware of and are given opportunities to tender for work. They do not mandate levels of work. This is not related to the Western Australian Jobs Act because that covers government agencies and trading enterprises. The Western Australian Jobs Act puts in processes by which the agreements reached as a part of tender processes are written into the actual contracts. What this bill does is set up a negotiation process between the miner—FMG—and the government, to put in place a local participation plan for local contractors, it and specifies that local contractors will be given an opportunity to bid for work. That is the difference between the two arrangements. I have always said, from the lobbying I have received on these issues, that we cannot mandate the level of local content that mining companies employ, but we can ensure that they are held to account for what they commit to. I think it is fair to say that local participation plans are good, but they are largely best endeavour-type arrangements—that is, the company commits to processes to allow fair bidding opportunities for local companies, but it does not do anything more than that; whereas the jobs act provides that when a company puts in a bid and offers the government certain arrangements, it can be tested against what other companies put in and what the successful bidding company agrees can be written into the contract. There will be a process between two bidders, and it will be determined on which one has a higher level of local content; that is one of the things that will be taken into account when awarding a contract.

The difference between the two is actually quite significant—I was going to say subtle. We are looking at what we can do to enhance local participation in the future with mining agreements or mining companies. Local participation plans have been inserted into state agreements since 2011. It is fairly standard in this case, but we are looking at how we might beef that up in the future. I think I have answered the principal question from the

opposition about this. It is a good question because it is important that we maximise local content. We are all in furious agreement. We want to see Fortescue Metals Group Ltd continue to employ Western Australians. Obviously, as Firetail's resource depletes, FMG will need to move to another resource that it has control over. It has decided that that resource is Eliwana and it requires a 100-kilometre rail line, which is a pretty significant amount of work. I am advised that just the construction of the railway to get from the Firetail deposit to the Eliwana deposit would create hundreds of jobs, and that is prior to the engineering, construction and operation of the Eliwana deposit.

In overall terms, this is a good thing for Western Australia. We want to get the Railway and Port (The Pilbara Infrastructure Pty Ltd) Agreement Amendment Bill 2018 through Parliament as soon as possible because there is a requirement on the part of The Pilbara Infrastructure Pty Ltd and FMG to get on with the work they need to do. That might become climactic, in fact; therefore, we would like to see this legislation passed as quickly as possible.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.

Third Reading

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade) [1.21 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [1.21 pm]: I will not talk for very long. We have said enough about the specifics of the agreement. We give our full support to the Railway and Port (The Pilbara Infrastructure Pty Ltd) Agreement Amendment Bill 2018 and we wish the companies well. They have to jump over a few hurdles, including getting \$1.9 million to get the rail underway, but given FMG's history, I am confident that it will get over this hurdle as well. I will follow up on the local participation agreement. I thank the Premier for answering the questions that we put forward, telling us that local participation agreements have been around since 2011, and outlining the difference between those and local participation plans in the Western Australian Jobs Bill. I understand the difference now. As the Premier indicated, there are some limits to the Western Australian Jobs Bill, and in procurement generally. This bill specifically provides that, for a variety of reasons, only firms, people and consultants domiciled in WA can be hired. We accept that. That has been the case for a long time. It has been one of the challenges of procurement. The Western Australian Jobs Bill specifies local industries, quite correctly and necessarily, as industries in any state in Australia and New Zealand. This bill before us is more specific and states —

... qualified Western Australian suppliers, manufacturers and contractors to tender or quote for works, materials ...

In other words, this agreement bill specifically refers to "Western Australian" and does not include other states and territories or New Zealand. My understanding is that the reason is that this agreement has been freely entered into between the state and FMG. Although it will be embedded into an act of Western Australia, it is an agreement that has been freely entered into and therefore it is not compulsory by force of law. The local content requirements in the legislation allows the government to require the proponent—in this case, FMG—to hire Western Australians rather than people from South Australia or New South Wales or anywhere else. It is a very pointed and powerful local content requirement that is available because of the unique nature of agreement acts. As the Premier put it, yes, the company must make its best endeavours. But history shows that best endeavours in the iron ore industry have generally been achieved, particularly with FMG, and even during times of full employment and a lack of spare capacity in fabrication and other areas. My view is that this is a very powerful mechanism to ensure that we have a continuation of Western Australian, as opposed to Australian and Kiwi, work activity by Western Australian-based firms in this area. This is very important because a lot of manufacturing and services based in Western Australia originated from support for our mining sector, particularly iron ore mining as it has expanded over the decades. These types of activities are an essential part of the food chain for our industry, which is why they were put into the agreement about six years ago. I am glad to see this bill before the house. Because of its specificity to WA, it is to some extent more powerful than the general government procurement job programs because of the restrictions in constitutional and international agreements.

The opposition will fully support this bill, as long as it gets through the house in a timely manner as a high priority. We will also support it in the other house to expedite its passage through Parliament to enable the companies to get on with this major development.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade) [1.26 pm] — in reply: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his support and for the opposition's commitment to expediting the bill through both houses.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

PAY-ROLL TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (EXEMPTION FOR TRAINEES) BILL 2018*Second Reading*

Resumed from 21 March.

MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [1.27 pm]: I stand to make a contribution today on the Pay-roll Tax Assessment Amendment (Exemption for Trainees) Bill 2018. I will start by acknowledging that the intent of this bill is to limit to \$100 000 the salary component of people who are entitled to seek an exemption for payroll tax. It also seeks to implement measures focused on training new employees rather than existing employees. It highlights a second phase, which is not part of this bill but states a policy intent to look at removing exemptions altogether and replacing them with a grants scheme. The Liberal Party has considered this bill and although we encourage the state to look at any poor behaviour whereby employers are looking to game the system, we will not support this bill in the house. Today I will articulate the arguments and the reasons for our concerns with this bill and why we will not support it.

Mr D.J. Kelly: You are defending the rorts.

MR D.C. NALDER: That is precisely what we thought members opposite would try to do—to say that we support the rorts. However, we will step through the arguments about why we will not support this bill. We do not believe it deals with the rorting of the system. We will make those arguments known in this place so that people can make up their minds about whether or not we have taken the appropriate action.

I want to spend a little time on this because as a result of this bill, and the briefings that we received from Treasury, I have taken the liberty to research and gain as broad an understanding as I possibly can on payroll tax in the state of Western Australia. I would like to share a few statistics with the house. Firstly, the data that has been obtained from state budget papers across the nation shows that, all in all, Western Australia is looking to generate around \$3.2 billion a year from payroll tax against a total across the nation of around \$23.8 billion. If we look at the number of people in the workforce in each state, Western Australia's workforce population of 1 339 000, and according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' labour force statistics, the current payroll tax revenue per employee is around \$2 408. The next closest state is New South Wales, with \$2 171 per employee. But if we look at an average of all the other states in Australia excluding Western Australia, the average is \$1 839 per employee. In Western Australia alone we are generating a tax against businesses for employing people of an additional almost \$600 per employee, compared with the average across the rest of this country.

Western Australia currently taxes its businesses in the form of payroll tax much more than any other jurisdiction in Australia. I raise that because arguments were made in the briefing that we received that Western Australia has the most generous exemption scheme compared with other states. The Department of Treasury provided information that the exemptions in Western Australia were approaching \$80 million, or 2.4 per cent of payroll tax. The payroll tax exemption per state over forward estimates is 2.4 per cent, or \$80 million. New South Wales is one per cent, or \$85 million, Victoria is only \$6 million and Queensland is \$36 million. I share those to provide some interesting statistics that make it look like we are quite generous in allocating exemptions. It works out to around \$59.75 per employee, if we use the ABS labour force statistics. That is compared with a national average of \$17.64. It is a more generous scheme. If we were to remove those exemptions, the gap of payroll tax that businesses are paying between us and the other states actually grows.

Mr D.J. Kelly: What is the importance of that?

MR D.C. NALDER: I thank the member for the question. The importance of this is pretty straightforward. The state's economy has been struggling and is going through major structural reform following its mining boom. There is no question about that. We already tax all businesses on employing people more than any other jurisdiction in this country. One of the arguments put forward to the Liberal Party during the briefings was that we have an overly generous exemption scheme. If we look at it purely on an exemption basis, it looks like that is the case. But if we take into consideration the payroll tax that is paid in every jurisdiction, our businesses pay much more than the exemption. With all the exemptions, we still have the highest payroll tax in the nation.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Do you therefore accept that rather than make the argument that you did, that it is okay to rort —

MR D.C. NALDER: No.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: —which was a policy response anyway, to increase the threshold or lower the rate?

MR D.C. NALDER: No, I am setting up the argument.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: That is exactly your argument.

MR D.C. NALDER: No. I thank the Treasurer for trying to verbal. I appreciate his attempts to verbal me because under no circumstances are we saying any such thing. I am just laying the framework for the arguments in talking about what the current payroll tax arrangements are in Western Australia relative to the rest of Australia. Part of the arguments put forward by the government as a reason for dealing with exemptions to payroll tax was that we

had the most generous exemptions in Australia. But when we look at the exemptions and combine them with the total payroll tax of Western Australia, we see that Western Australian businesses are paying more payroll tax per employee than any other state in Australia.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Treasurer!

Mr D.C. NALDER: I know that I am making the Treasurer feel quite uncomfortable, because as I lay out these arguments, he is going to experience more discomfort with what I highlight in this speech today. This is inappropriate; this is a tax grab by the government and has nothing to do with the rorting, and I will mount the arguments to demonstrate that case.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members.

Mr D.C. NALDER: We have just been hearing from the Treasurer that we have an issue with rorting from businesses in Western Australia. I will quote from the Treasurer's second reading speech. It states —

Immediate changes were necessary to address the tax avoidance behaviour of many employers who have been using the exemption primarily for the purpose of minimising their payroll tax liability, rather than using the exemption to address real skill gaps in their business.

I have had a look at WA employees in training as a proportion of the workforce and I have taken that information from the ABS and the National Centre for Vocational Research. It shows that over the last six years the percentage of the workforce in training has declined. It has been declining for the last six years and is approaching 2.5 per cent. We are down from 3.5 per cent. The government is putting forward an argument that we have this growing arrangement of inappropriate behaviour by businesses that are rorting the exemptions on the payroll tax system, yet the percentage of people in training, including apprentices, has been declining for the last six years.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr D.C. NALDER: It hardly shows growth of the systemic rorting issues within the payroll tax exemption that the Treasurer is claiming. What I find fascinating about this, and we will explore it a little further, is that we have had only anecdotal evidence from the government that there has been rorting. No specific evidence has been supplied. When government members talk about tax avoidance, they are making a very serious claim on businesses. I hope they are going to pass that on to the appropriate authorities so that they can explore, investigate and charge those people who are avoiding tax, because that is what we should be doing here. We do not, for one minute, support any business that is gaming the system for its own benefit, but the government is making the claim that there is tax avoidance. We are saying put up or shut up. Put up the evidence that there is tax avoidance, because we are not seeing that whatsoever.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.C. NALDER: Further to that, in the briefing we heard about the former government's attempts to close some of the loopholes; the Treasurer acknowledged it. Over the last three years we have seen a reduction in exemptions claims from around \$90 million down to \$80 million. We have seen a decline. In the last three years we have hardly seen further compounded growth. I come back to the point that our economy is recovering. Our economy has been going through structural reform. The government is about to pull the rug out from under organisations that may need to reskill their employees to ensure that they are more productive. We are going to pull the rug out from under them by doing this tax grab. That is inappropriate. It is the reason the opposition cannot support this bill.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Say something specific. Deal with the specific cases of rorting that have been talked about.

Mr D.C. NALDER: We are asking the government to provide them. Just to clarify, there is no evidence of systemic rorting. There is no specific evidence of any rorting. Exemptions have been falling for the past three years. The number of trainees, as a percentage of the workforce, has been falling.

Mr D.J. Kelly: You sound like you're going back to your old banking days.

Point of Order

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I refer to standing order 95. The constant noise and interruptions from the Minister for Water are becoming burdensome.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price): There is no point of order. Members, can we hear the member in silence, please.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.C. NALDER: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr D.J. Kelly: It is royal commission into banking rhetoric.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr D.C. NALDER: I have plenty of time, so I am happy to actually take that on. I am proud of the service that I provided to the ANZ bank for 18 years. I am proud of the people whom I worked alongside, who actually worked hard to deliver the best possible service for the people of Australia.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mr D.C. NALDER: The minister is a disgrace.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Water!

Mr D.C. NALDER: At a high level, we have talked about the fact that there is a claim of tax avoidance, yet we have seen no specific evidence of that. Claims for exemptions by businesses have been reducing since measures were put in place back in 2014–15. As I said before, the number of trainees as a percentage of the workforce has been falling for the last six years. There is hardly something systemic here.

I will spend some time looking at specific issues with this bill. We are talking about removing those businesses that can rot. If a business is going to rot and a new set of rules is put in place, that business is going to explore ways of exploiting those new rules. One of the rules is going to be the introduction of a \$100 000 base salary. On the surface, I do not necessarily disagree with the intent—\$100 000 sounds about right. I would not mind if it were \$80 000. However, that is not the point. The point is that this is based on someone's base salary. If I were an organisation that wanted to game the system and the government put in place a new measure of a \$100 000 base salary, what would stop that organisation from establishing a base salary of \$99 000 and adding on a lot of different fringe benefits for the employee, which do not get calculated, so that it can still claim the trainee exemption? How does that solve rotting? This is where I am getting to the detail of the bill. As I have said, we are not supporting people who rot the system, but we want to see the evidence. Secondly, we are saying that if the government is going to put measures in place, it has to make sure that they are robust measures that will stop the rotting.

The second issue concerns new employees. The government is removing an exemption for existing employees. The example I want to give is a mine that is closing down in Ravensthorpe. There may be an opportunity for a business to reinvent itself. There may be an opportunity for it to protect its employees by reskilling them into other areas. However, we are removing any possible support around payroll tax exemptions for anybody who has existing employees. What the government is doing is that if anybody wants to take this to the nth degree, it will potentially cost existing employees their jobs. I do not think that is necessarily appropriate. At the same time, as I have said, when a state goes through the economic times that Western Australia has over the last decade, there are fundamental shifts in the requirements of the workforce. We know that we have been shifting from construction to production in Western Australia. What we want is for the employee base to be reskilled to be able to confront tomorrow. That is not what this government is considering undertaking. Again, I think it fails on that basis.

The other point is to do with the fact that these exemptions are generous. As I said, these exemptions equate to \$59.75 per employee in Western Australia against a total average for the nation of \$17.64. It sounds generous when we look at it as simply as that. When I take into account that the average payroll tax per employee in Western Australia comes in at \$2 408 compared with the average for the rest of the country of \$1 839, we can see that we already pay considerably more payroll tax than any other state in Australia. That \$2 408 is after the exemptions are removed. If the exemptions are added back, it goes up to \$2 467 per employee. We are talking in excess of \$600 more per employee than the average across all other states. That is a burden that our employees will take on. The government is removing this exemption, which will ultimately put the burden back on employers, who are already facing a larger burden for running a business and employing people in Western Australia than any business in the rest of the country. Again, it is totally inappropriate. If anything, we should look at ways to reduce payroll tax and reduce the burden on Western Australian businesses.

The other thing that goes to the heart of this bill and the issues members on our side of the chamber have is the proposed intent that has been flagged through this bill. On the one hand, the Treasury briefing says that all moneys saved through these measures will be retained for training purposes, then further on in the Treasury briefing it says that it will create \$100 million in savings for the government. I sit there going, "Hang on, if it is going to be retained for training, that means we are still going to spend it. How is it saving \$100 million?" I think it has something to do with the national partnership agreement on training. It seems a little strange that on the one hand the government is advising that the money will be retained for training and on the other hand it is telling us that it will create \$100 million in savings for the budget. I might be missing something. I look forward to hearing the response from the government on this issue.

The opposition has looked seriously at this bill. There is no way that we support any mechanism that would allow businesses to game a system. In fact, they were challenges that the previous government faced. We put measures in place to ensure that we could reduce the effects of gaming. We have seen a reduction in the exemptions from \$90 million down towards \$80 million a year. When I look at the complete picture of payroll tax, I do not believe it is a big deal when we charge approaching \$600 per employee more and we are providing a higher average in terms of exemptions—about \$40 an employee more than every other state. If we talk about rorting of the system, we need to see genuine evidence of that. I have looked at the statistics on the number of people in the work force and the percentage of people in training as a proportion of the total work force, which has declined over the last six years. I hardly see a system that is growing or which suggests that there is a systemic issue in the exemption process.

If the government is going to move from an exemption basis to a grants system, a major point I have is that I find it embarrassing that government members would stand up and suggest that they know better than business what the appropriate training requirements are for their staff. That is the message being sent by government—that businesses are not providing the best possible training for their employees or trying to generate the greatest productivity of their employees, and that the government knows best. Government members are saying that they know what specific training a business's employees require. I believe that is absolutely ludicrous. If the government cannot define the rules for an exemption basis and it wants to put in place greater bureaucracy and red tape for businesses so that they have to jump over hurdles to receive an exemption or a grant to be able to ensure that their staff are adequately trained, the government should give up now. I think it is a disgrace if people believe that the government or government bureaucrats have a better understanding of the training requirements for Western Australian employees than their employers. I believe that all businesses in Western Australia should be horrified at the thought. We already have too great a burden of red tape and bureaucracy on businesses that operate in Western Australia and, if anything, we should be doing whatever we can to reduce that burden. The government has introduced a grants scheme that will create additional hurdles; it is adding to the red tape and bureaucracy that businesses in the state of Western Australia will face. This will make our businesses in Western Australia less competitive than businesses elsewhere in Australia. We cannot sit by and allow that to happen.

To reiterate my main points, the opposition does not support rorting of the system but we have seen no specific evidence of rorting. We see no systemic rorting of the payroll tax exemptions. The percentage of the workforce in training has been falling from 3.5 per cent to 2.5 per cent. If we do not have growing systemic rorting, why is the government making a systemic change to policy? If there are specific issues, the exceptions should be managed. The government should not make wholesale policy changes that catch everybody else who is doing the right thing and punish them for a few outliers who may be doing the wrong thing. The government should deal with the outliers—the people who are doing the wrong thing—without adversely impact on everybody else in Western Australia who is doing the right thing. The government should give them the freedom to go on and prosper, to run their businesses how they see fit, and to look at how they can improve the productivity of their workforce without a government looking over their shoulder and dictating how they should run their businesses. That is what the government is attempting to do through phases 1 and 2 of this bill. We will not sit by idly and allow that to happen. We will do everything we can to raise the alarm in Western Australia about this cash grab that the government is trying to go after.

Finally, I reiterate that we do not for one minute condone inappropriate behaviour regarding exemptions to payroll tax, but we do not have the evidence to support the wholesale changes that will be made to the act and the wholesale changes that are being proposed for exemptions to payroll tax.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [1.53 pm]: I would like to follow on from the member for Bateman, the shadow Treasurer, and reiterate that we objectively looked at the Pay-roll Tax Assessment Amendment (Exemption for Trainees) Bill 2018 when we were in government. We looked particularly at the issues of the rapid growth in exemptions and expenditure, and exemptions for payroll tax for training. It was a special time in Western Australia when employment growth was very high, wages growth was very high and a lot of structural change was occurring. There was the construction boom and we were going to a production boom. We were concerned about certain characteristics of the use of the exemptions, so we looked into the source and analysed it. We put in measures, particularly capping the share of the workforce that was eligible for the exemptions, which we thought would perhaps reduce expenditure more effectively across firms, and strengthened the program. We identified a source of the problem—excessive use—and sought to address it. The government, however, has chosen to phase it out altogether in a two-stage process and go into grants. That is essentially what we have been told will happen. As the member for Bateman indicated, the basis for this is a claim by the government that systemic rorting through excessive use—systemic tax evasion of the system—remains. We asked the government for evidence. We are not arguing that there is no evidence, we just want to see it. Government members and their advisers have been unable to provide that evidence. We are talking about training in an environment in which training is declining and a business sector that is going through a major transformation, as the member for Bateman outlined, from investment, to production, to diversification of our economy. Training is absolutely essential for not only employing new people, but also retraining old employees. The government's

proposal is to basically abandon a major program to support training and go to grants. We do not know what the grants will be. We do not know what the system will be. We do not know what the allocation will be but the government is implementing a two-stage process to phase out payroll tax exemptions, which have been used in this state for many years. They were put place in by a previous Labor government and are used in virtually all other states in the nation.

If the government was serious about this issue, it would have undertaken a thorough review by consultants, bureaucrats, or somebody, provided evidence and put it forward as the basis for the bill. The government would also give some indication of where it was going with grants. The government would also ask whether it can fix the exemption system in the payroll tax arrangement rather than throw it out because we know that there are problems with grants, particularly with targeting in the bureaucracy. However, the government has not done that. It has told us, as we understand it, that all the money saved—I have heard \$60 million will be saved in the first tranche, then \$40 million—will remain in the training system. We asked the advisers where the savings would go from the first tranche of reforms that are proposed in this bill. They said that it will essentially backfill a national partnership on training with the commonwealth that has not been renewed for the last year, and which still has not been renewed. The idea is that the partnership will not be renewed, which will constitute the ongoing savings from this bill. I think the \$60 million would be used to backfill for the national agreement; I might be wrong, but that is what we were told and it was implied in responses to our questions. However, we contacted the commonwealth and were told that the money for the national agreement is in the commonwealth budget for all the states, and will remain in the next budget and across the forward estimates. The money is there to renew the national partnership but the national partnership is changing. Before, it came largely without strings attached but now, a new agreement will have some strings attached to it. I am not sure what the strings will be, but the money from the commonwealth is there to be had. Our concern is that although this will generate savings and the savings in one year might replace the money lost from the lack of a national partnership, in the medium term, the national partnership will be renewed and the money will go to savings; it is a backdoor way to increase payroll tax.

If that is what the government is doing, it should be honest about it and tell us. We will definitely not support the bill if that is the case. The other issue is that we asked for a systematic understanding of tax avoidance and asked how it could be addressed. The central point here is that all the training arrangements that receive an exemption have to receive the approval of the Department of Training and Workforce Development. The department has the ability to vet, control, restrict and alter the eligibility and detail of the exemptions. In other words, it has the ability to crack down on tax evasion. Why does it not do it? We know that firms know more about optimal training arrangements for their workers than bureaucrats. We also know that grants have a fundamental problem in that they are often—in fact, usually, almost inevitably—surrounded by a large amount of red tape, delays and difficulties.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

CHILD PROTECTION — CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE — ROEBOURNE

220. Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS to the Minister for Police:

The former police commissioner, Dr O'Callaghan, recently confirmed on Twitter that he could not access data from the Department for Child Protection and Family Support on how many children were being case managed in Roebourne when they were assaulted. Can the minister confirm whether the current police commissioner now has access to this information?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for the question. My understanding is that the current police commissioner is working very closely with the Department of Communities and the director general, and that he has conducted visits to that community and has done it in conjunction with that office. I have received no complaint from the current police commissioner about access.

CHILD PROTECTION — CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE — ROEBOURNE

221. Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS to the Minister for Police:

I have a supplementary question. Given that the system seems to be working well between police and the Department of Communities now, can the minister confirm to this house and the people of Western Australia that none of the 184 innocent victims of child sex abuse in Roebourne are currently living with an accused or convicted paedophile?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

WA police have advised me that they are not aware of any children living with a convicted paedophile in Roebourne. If the member has any information, I would be more than happy to pass it on to police.

PAY-ROLL TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENTS — FEEDBACK

222. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Finance:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's proposed amendments to the Pay-roll Tax Assessment Act that will genuinely encourage businesses to hire and train staff and provide 40 000 more training places. Can the minister outline to the house feedback he has received from key stakeholders in the business community and whether any legitimate concerns have been brought to his attention?

Mr B.S. WYATT replied:

I thank the member for the question. Can I say that I am so disappointed in the Liberal Party today. The Leader of the Opposition abandoned what he once stood for years ago, but I am surprised by the shadow Treasurer and other members of the Liberal Party who today are now backing in the sort of rorting that I have explained to this place time and again over the last few weeks.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr B.S. WYATT: What is interesting are the reasons given by the shadow Treasurer—because we pay higher payroll tax than other states, all those businesses are entitled to rort to reduce the amount they pay. That is the position taken by the shadow Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr B.S. WYATT: They ask, "Where are your examples?" I have gone through them time and again. They are backing in a company whose employees are doing a certificate III in civil construction but that company does not do any civil construction. Is that legitimate?

Mr A. Krsticevic: Why is that a rort?

Mr B.S. WYATT: That perhaps highlights —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, please, I want to hear the answer.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is a former employee of the Australian Taxation Office.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Are you finished? Do you want to keep going, member for Carine? I call you to order for the first time.

Mr B.S. WYATT: These are companies that enrol all their workforce in training and then right towards the end of that training pull them out to re-enrol so they can extend their payroll tax exemption. That is what the shadow Treasurer and the former employee of the ATO think is "Tick; that's all okay." Do members know why? It is because they pay too much already. That is the reason they have given.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine!

Mr B.S. WYATT: I want to tell members what the Liberal Party is voting against. Interestingly, even the shadow Treasurer said that the \$100 000 cap on salaries could have been about \$80 000—he would have been comfortable with that. We are allowing for a \$100 000 cap on ordinary wages to deal with those issues that the National Party and others have raised about allowances in regional WA. This is the point I want to make, because I am worried about the fiscal knowledge that has been expressed from the other side. All the savings from this will be going into more training. There are two components to this. The Leader of the Opposition said that he spoke to the commonwealth and the commonwealth said that it was all okay and it would keep funding the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform. I am glad the Leader of the Opposition is trusting the commonwealth, because of course there will be a national partnership on skills, but the reality is that it will be much more limited.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr B.S. WYATT: Right now, if this bill does not make it through the Parliament, it will impact on 17 000 training places this year alone and across the forward estimates. This decline—there is a decline—will be the Liberal Party's fault if it is successful in defeating this reform, because those 17 000 places, about 34 million bucks a year, can be funded only in this way. There is no other way that these can be funded. The other thing the Liberal Party is doing by opposing this is not allowing them to be extended to small business. Currently, small businesses that do not have a payroll high enough, above \$850 000, to qualify for a payroll tax exemption get nothing. But we will fund the scheme so that they too can get government support.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes, Leader of the Opposition, but if we want to spend money supporting them, we have to find it. This will do that.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, the question was asked and someone is answering it. Just listen.

Mr B.S. WYATT: This will fund those small businesses. Interestingly, what I fear has happened with the Liberal Party is that it has succumbed to the self-interested campaign of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia. That is what the Liberal Party has done. The CCI is an organisation that is dependent on the current regime. That is how it funds itself.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I want to highlight a couple of comments made by the CCI—two in particular. This is what Mr Newnham, the economist at the CCI, said back in April last year —

... reining in spending must be the foundation of all budget and debt repair efforts,” ...

“Treasurer Ben Wyatt must leave no stone unturned in his search for savings—every single area of expenditure must be reviewed to bring the WA budget back to surplus ...

He is right. The problem is I have turned this rock over and there I found Mr Newnham, the CCI and the shadow Treasurer blinking at me—“Look at other areas”, they are saying, “not the areas that we claim flows of money from. Look at other areas, not the areas that we are direct beneficiaries of.” The Liberal Party has succumbed to that. I am stunned because Mr Newnham also made the following point.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr B.S. WYATT: Mr Newnham also made this point, which he tweeted just earlier this week. I quote —

WA is still the highest spending ... state government in Australia. Reducing spending to bring us back in line with the rest of the nation must remain the priority.

Do members know what has been one of the greatest increasing areas of spend by WA taxpayers over the last decade? It is this payroll tax exemption. It has increased by nearly 800 per cent over the last decade—much higher than employment and much higher than wages.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yet the CCI demands that health, education and everything else must be cut, but not the mechanism that funds its activities. I am disappointed in the shadow Treasurer. He is now backing in a system that is open to exploitation. Does that mean everyone is exploiting? Of course it does not, but to use this argument —

Dr M.D. Nahan: Fix it!

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am trying to fix it, Leader of the Opposition, you buffoon! That is exactly what we are trying to do—we are trying to fix it. The Leader of the Opposition had a crack a few years ago and it did not work. To his credit, he had a go, but like all his things, like all his budgets, it was half-hearted and it never did the job. This will do the job. It will stop the rorting that Dr Nahan wants to protect. It will stop the ongoing rorting.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr B.S. WYATT: It will continue because, ultimately, the Liberal Party is in that corner. I hope members of Parliament in the upper house have the sense to see that we have an opportunity to fund training positions this year and next year—because I guarantee members that the commonwealth government will not fund them like it has—and then extend it to small businesses. I want to highlight one other point to the Liberal Party. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia has been mischievous and self-interested in its commentary about this matter. It said that up to 5 500 small businesses will lose their benefits as a result of this. Only 2 900 businesses claim it in its entirety, and many of those are very large. When the member for Churchlands takes advice from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, it should be subject to critique and suspicion and scepticism.

Mr S.K. L’Estrange interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Churchlands, if you keep interjecting, it will go even longer.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Ultimately, this is government money. It is providing important support for training for the people of Western Australia. It is our responsibility to ensure that it is not rorted. The Liberal Party today has confirmed that it stands for that rort.

CHILD PROTECTION — CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE — ROEBOURNE

223. Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE to the Minister for Child Protection:

Given the minister's answers in the Legislative Council that she is receiving regular updates about whether any of the 184 innocent victims of child abuse in Roebourne are living with an accused or convicted paedophile, can the minister assure the Western Australian public that none of these children is residing with any of these dangerous paedophiles?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I am not sure how many questions I have answered along these lines, but I will continue to give assurances to the WA public, but importantly the public of the west Pilbara, that we have child safety firmly in our sights. We are doing everything that we can to coordinate the efforts of child protection workers, police, community service organisations and the community with a view to maximising child safety. We will continue to do that. We are also putting together a plan that I imagine we will get to talk about in detail in the debate on the matter of public interest coming up after question time. The plan tries to ensure that there are community efforts and activities on the ground to address a range of different gaps in existing services—for instance, supported safe houses and night shelters for men and increasing youth activities and the like. We are continuing to do that and we have done that largely in response to demands from the community, which says that these are some of the gaps on the ground in Roebourne and in the west Pilbara. We will continue to do that.

The opposition is obsessed with asking the government to give an unequivocal guarantee that no accused or convicted perpetrator will ever reside with a child. I wish I could give that guarantee across the state. Roebourne and the west Pilbara and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse show us that child safety is everyone's responsibility. It is the police's responsibility. It is Child Protection's responsibility. It is a community responsibility. We want to build up the community's understanding of where children are vulnerable to make sure that there is no time when children are left unprotected. That is our priority. We have worked on that from the beginning and we will continue to work on it.

CHILD PROTECTION — CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE — ROEBOURNE

224. Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE to the Minister for Child Protection:

I have a supplementary question. Will the Minister for Child Protection commit to provide a ministerial statement before the house rises tomorrow, outlining the basis upon which she considers the 184 child victims in Roebourne to be safe?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

We will have a debate on this issue after question time today, so we will have an opportunity to go through in detail the government's response in Roebourne and in the west Pilbara and what we are doing throughout the community as a whole to maximise child safety. As I said before, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to say that no child is at risk in this state ever. However, my job is to make sure that my agency works with other government agencies, community organisations and the community to properly understand when children are at risk and to put in place protections whenever risk is involved. That is our job. We will do it in communities and institutions such as churches and schools. We will ensure that it is done wherever it is needed, but we will not demonise a particular community. We will not turn unfair attention on a community and ignore the responsibility that we all have throughout this whole state. We will work positively with any community affected to build it up and ensure that the community, the families and children are safe.

TAFE — TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

225. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting TAFE and providing more training opportunities for Western Australians, which has been demonstrated by the recent partnership between Rio Tinto and South Metropolitan TAFE. Can the Premier outline to the house how this government is driving the future economic development of our state through our training system and rebuilding TAFE, which was gutted by the previous Minister for Training and Workforce Development?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Belmont for that important question. We are absolutely committed to increasing training opportunities for Western Australians across this great state and to rebuilding TAFE. Over the last eight and a half years of the Liberal–National government, fees for ordinary Western Australian kids leaving school wanting

to undertake courses at TAFE increased by 500 per cent. Therefore, many courses were put out of reach and enrolments dropped. One of our first actions on coming to government was to freeze TAFE fees across Western Australia for the duration of this term of government. We are implementing a range of other initiatives by expanding the Priority Start policy. We are on track to open five of the metropolitan Jobs and Skills WA centres, and regional centres will follow later this year. We are committed to a major upgrade of Collie TAFE, which is in the budget. The private sector has also come on board. Last week the Minister for Training and Workforce Development and Rio Tinto announced a partnership for the first automation qualifications at South Metropolitan TAFE. That is an important area as we see increasing automation, in particular in the mining industry. South Metro TAFE and Rio Tinto are putting those courses in place. South Metro TAFE has become a major training provider for Australian shipbuilding to lead the design and implementation of specific shipbuilding qualifications across Australia.

In addition to the 500 per cent increase in TAFE fees put in place by the member for Scarborough when she was minister, under the new national partnership agreement, the commonwealth government has cut \$54 million per annum from Western Australia. Over the forward estimates over the course of this term of government, there will be a \$200 million shortfall in funding for TAFE because the commonwealth government does not care about training in Western Australia. We heard the Treasurer answer the question before. We are determined to do what we can to reinstate funding into TAFE by getting rid of some of the payroll roting. If members do not support our initiative, they do not support TAFE. That money is going directly to providing TAFE places. We have to understand that it is a fact that the commonwealth is pulling out \$54 million a year from TAFE. To make that up, we have to get rid of some of those rorts in the payroll tax system.

We are trying to make sure that TAFE is supported as it should be, and with a 500 per cent increase in TAFE fees when the Liberal and National Parties were in office, they should be ashamed of their performance when it comes to training. We are trying to reinstate important support for the TAFE sector by getting rid of roting and making sure we try to make up some of the shortfall that the commonwealth is pulling out. If we are unable to do that and the opposition does not allow those initiatives through the upper house of this Parliament, we cannot provide those positions in TAFE. That is a natural consequence. Members opposite need to think about that because that is exactly what will happen and that will be on their head.

POLICE — DISTRICT BOUNDARIES REALIGNMENT

226. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the recent realignment of metropolitan policing district boundaries and the police commissioner's comment on PerthNow of 5 April that there will be more police officers in local police stations.

Can the minister rule out removing frontline police FTEs from regional areas to fill the commitment to more officers in metropolitan police stations?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for the question. It is good to have the opportunity to make some references to the changes to the policing model. The member clearly does not understand that one of the reasons there will be more officers in local police stations is the discontinuance of the so-called local policing teams. These changes will basically take police officers from some metropolitan duties to frontline response roles in the metropolitan area. It is not about taking any FTEs or police officers from regional Western Australia and bringing them to metropolitan Western Australia. I might add that since coming to government, we have had a special focus on regional Western Australia. I believe that fairly early on we announced about eight additional officers for Port Hedland, as well as a police dog, because that was an area very much understaffed. The commissioner is looking at how we can better support regional Western Australia. There is nothing in the new policing model about taking any policing resource from regional Western Australia.

POLICE — DISTRICT BOUNDARIES REALIGNMENT

227. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Police:

I have a supplementary question. Why, then, are officers from the Dampier water police being forced to relocate to Perth rather than being relocated to fill existing gaps in regional police stations?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for the question. That is not indicative of any positions being taken out of regional Western Australia.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The member is talking about individual officers, so those positions could well be—I anticipate they would be—allocated to regional Western Australia. Does it mean that those individuals will go to regional Western Australia? Not necessarily. Those individuals may well be redeployed to the metropolitan area, and five other officers currently in the metropolitan area may be deployed to regional Western Australia. That is what I see as the likely outcome. I have been having discussions as recently as earlier this week with Commissioner Dawson about focusing some more resources and more FTEs in regional Western Australia, and I hope to update the house about that in the near future.

RAIL FREIGHT

228. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to increase the share of freight on rail and easing pressure on truck movements. Can the minister outline to the house how the government is delivering on this commitment without having to build a flawed, multibillion road that does not reach the port?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for that question. People may recall that we took a pretty strong policy to the election, which was to start planning for the new outer-harbour port and to undertake a number of actions over the shorter term to relieve pressure on our roads. A number of things are underway. The support of new intermodal transport is very much underway. There will be upgrades to the High Street area and, of course, those concept plans have been released for our proposal to reduce congestion and improve efficiency on that road on the way to the port. Of course, the other key factor was that we were going to increase the subsidy for freight on rail because we believe that as part of a comprehensive and coordinated package, we need to look at all elements to make sure we deliver great outcomes for WA. We are also taking the same approach in regional WA because we believe that we have to have a coordinated plan to achieve our objectives. That was our commitment. Since that subsidy has been in place, we have seen an increase of freight on rail. The percentage before it was in place was under 15 per cent. In just three months, that has moved to over 17 per cent freight on rail.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: After three months of that subsidy being in place —

Dr M.D. Nahan: How much does it cost?

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you will possibly be going home early.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Compared with \$1.8 billion, it is pretty affordable. The opposition, which never did business cases for a \$ 1.8 billion stadium, comes into this place and wants to talk about the cost benefit of our expenditure.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: This is smart spending; it is about a coordinated approach to delivering results. Thousands of truck movements are off our roads, making sure that when we say something at the election, we deliver.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In three months there has been a massive increase.

Mr D.C. Nalder: A two per cent increase.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is it a two per cent increase?

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No wonder the opposition failed with the finances so much; it cannot even work out percentages. Seriously, we have seen again and again an opposition living in the past.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Utter chaos.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Chaos? Look at the opposition. If we want to see a definition of chaos, it is the opposition. Go to the dictionary one day and look at the definition of "chaos". It will say, "See current state opposition." It is an opposition stuck in the past. As I said, if we want to relive the 2017 election again and again, we will. It is a plan that is working, that has community support and that we are committed to.

DAVID LINDNER

229. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Police:

Can the minister please explain how police were aware that David Lindner was in the state and what failure in communication enabled a known paedophile to abuse innocent children and what exact action the minister has undertaken to give police more powers to prevent this ever happening again?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I had some difficulty hearing all of that question but I think I have the gist of it. People will be aware from news reports and other sources that David Lindner was deported from Canada to Western Australia in 2012. The advice that has been made public, reiterated by Deputy Commissioner Stephen Brown on radio today, is that police were aware and that he was on the reportable offender list, SOMS—the sexual offender management system—and was subject to reportable conditions. People will also be aware that there are some significant restrictions in terms of what can be said publicly. I have asked a lot of questions to which I have not received answers, because police have told me that under the provisions of the act, they are unable to give me, as police minister, that information. I am finding that very frustrating because I want to know what occurred back then.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: Bring in some amendments.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I will take that interjection from the member for Hillarys about this very serious matter. The member for Hillarys may be aware that the Law Reform Commission reviewed the act in, I think, 2012. Some further reports were given to his government, which I have taken the opportunity to re-read. I am not sure what became of all the recommendations of either the Law Reform Commission or police back then, but I know that the issue of this legislation is something that I raised with the former Commissioner of Police at some of the very early discussions we had when we came to government. A range of things concern me about the act. One of the issues raised with me often is the level at which someone becomes a reportable offender. Although we can seem to be very tough by putting more and more people on the list, it gives police a greater challenge. According to Deputy Commissioner Brown, there are about 3 500 reportable sex offenders. I know from interactions I have had with members of my electorate and other members of the community that some people do not believe that their relative has committed a crime serious enough to be on there and that police are perhaps wasting a resource monitoring those persons. Often, that is when there is a small gap in years between the offender and the person offended against—for example, an 18, 19 or 20-year-old boy with a 13, 14 or 15-year-old girl. Some of those people are put on the list. To my way of thinking, there is a quantum leap from that kind of offender to an offender who is 40, 50 or 60 years of age who is doing heinous things to five, six, seven, eight, nine or 12-year-olds. People who commit those heinous offences are the ones who I think need a higher level of monitoring. Quite clearly, there is a need to review the information that police are allowed to disclose to myself, the community and those who are associated with the victims. Police have been hamstrung by the legislation in what they have been able to tell the victim's father, who was on the radio today. I understand the frustration that he has felt. That is why the legislation needs to be reviewed. I have asked for it to be reviewed and that review is currently with the Assistant Commissioner of Crime, Mr Gary Budge. I will ask the commissioner for updates at the regular meetings I have with the Commissioner of Police because I would like to see recommendations from the police about what would assist them operationally and assist the community come forward at the earliest opportunity.

DAVID LINDNER

230. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Police:

I have a supplementary question.

- (1) Given that David Lindner was able to act in the way he did, does the minister accept that the current system is broken?
- (2) What undertakings will the minister make to see some legislative change to meet community expectations for such offences and behaviour?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

- (1)–(2) It is impossible for me to make an informed decision about whether the system is broken because I am not able to be apprised of the exact circumstances of what has gone on there. I do not think that is acceptable. I am seeking further advice from the State Solicitor about what information the Western Australia Police Force is able to give me. Indeed, as part of the court case and its findings, information was released that has not been able to be provided to me. More information has come out there. There seems to me to be some contradictions. I know that the father has said that local detectives were not informed and that they did not know this person was a reportable offender, yet the advice that I get is that he has publicly been declared as a reportable offender. The advice that I get is that local police and local detectives are routinely informed and they have those lists. I have taken the trouble of making inquiries of several police sergeants from local jurisdictions over recent months. I have asked, "Are you aware of the reportable sex offenders in your area? Do you get that list? Do you get that information?" The response that I have had is that they do. I have no information to suggest that the offender in this circumstance was not known to the local district office.

There are some significant issues here, but I will say that our government has been pretty quick to target dangerous sexual offenders. The Attorney General brought legislation to this place very early on. Some of the issues that have come out about this have been about the length of the sentence—that it is an 11-year sentence, that that is not long enough and that he could be out in nine years. Under the legislation that our Attorney General and our government put before this house, he can be declared a dangerous sexual offender and kept in jail indefinitely. He can be detained there. Further than that, under our government and our Attorney General, we have reversed the onus of proof on him to demonstrate that he is not a danger to the community if he is to be released. We have already taken action on dangerous sexual offenders. The Attorney General and I will work together to bring forward more law reforms in an area that, sadly, the member's government ignored for some years.

POLICE — DISTRICT BOUNDARIES REALIGNMENT

231. Mr M.J. FOLKARD to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the announcement last week by Commissioner Dawson of the changes to the arrangements for metropolitan police. Can the minister outline to the house how these changes differ from the existing structure and how they improve on the discarded Frontline 2020 model, which was championed by the former police minister and the then Liberal–National government?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for the question. As a former police officer, he obviously maintains a very strong interest in policing and law and order issues. The member for Burns Beach was one of the people who got to live the so-called metropolitan operating model on a daily basis.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The member who asked the question is a former officer who was in charge of a metropolitan police station so he knows the impact of those changes on police officers, in particular, and the community.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! It is not a chat show!

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The fact of the matter is that under the member for Scarborough's leadership, the former government put before the community a policing model that failed the community. It tried an experiment in the south east metropolitan area. It trialled a new model of policing in which it broke policing into response teams and local policing teams. It then robbed other metropolitan districts of officers for a period while it conducted that trial. With more police officers, it said that it was a great model because it had driven down crime and improved response times. The government then rolled the model out everywhere on that basis. The only problem was that it was a labour-intensive model and did not deliver sufficient police officers to be able to make the model work. As a result, as people in this house will remember—the community certainly remembers it!—we saw double-digit increases in crime month after month. The WA Police Union president, George Tilbury, members of his board and other police officers continually advised of the stress that it put those front-line response teams under. As people are aware, when Commissioner Dawson took up the position, he did a complete and objective review. Having been out of the state for three years heading up the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, he was able to come back with a fresh pair of eyes, look across the system and see how it could be improved. I think he was disappointed when he saw that police stations, including central, where he was superintendent in charge many years ago, had fewer police officers at their disposal than 10 or 15 years ago. That was a shame.

Any members who talk to their constituents also know that the big metropolitan districts became way too large. Midland or East Metro was added with Perth or Central. Police officers were being dispatched from Wembley to Lesmurdie in the hills, then out to Ellenbrook or the valley. It made for some very lengthy response times. Response times blew out and crime went up. Under the new model, we have eight metropolitan districts, being Perth, Midland, Mirrabooka, Joondalup, Cannington, Fremantle, Mandurah and Armadale. It reinstates Mandurah's status as a proper local policing district and, for the first time, Armadale will have its own policing district.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: That need has been known for years, but the former government failed to respond to it. When it targeted the south east metropolitan district for its trial, otherwise known broadly as Cannington district, it knew that it was the biggest and most problematic district. One reason is that it had two huge growth areas in it—one around Cannington and one around Armadale. This is a return to local policing.

In conclusion, the Commissioner of Police has also taken the opportunity to focus on family and domestic violence in accordance with our government's priorities. That will mean that each of those eight metropolitan policing districts will have front-line response officers dedicated to targeting the heinous crime of family and domestic assaults.

MOORA RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE — GST DISTRIBUTION — TREASURER'S COMMENTS

232. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:

I refer to the member for Balcatta's question to the Treasurer yesterday and the Treasurer's comment that the \$140 million GST windfall to the state is a tiny amount of revenue.

(1) Does the Premier agree that \$140 million is a tiny amount of revenue?

- (2) Given his decision to close Moora Residential College and privatise all camp schools was predicated on failing to achieve an even tinier amount of revenue through his increased gold royalty, will he now seek to overturn those savage cuts to education?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Moore so much for the question; I am really appreciative.

- (1)–(2) In life, things are comparative. I want to draw a few comparisons to members' attention. In office, the Liberals and Nationals lost the state forty thousand million dollars, so \$140 million compared with that—the Treasurer is right—is relatively small.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Members opposite had deficits on an annual basis of \$3.5 billion—three thousand five hundred million dollars. Compared with that, \$140 million is relatively small. On an annual basis, we are still subsidising the eastern states, through the GST system that the Liberals and Nationals signed us up to, to the tune of \$3.5 billion a year. Again, \$140 million is relatively small compared with that. So everything is comparative.

The numbers and the money that the Liberals and Nationals lost in office is massive compared with this windfall that we have received. Our increase in GST revenue is 2c above what we were budgeting for.

Mr D.C. Nalder: It was 30c more last year.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Please, it was a Nationals WA question. They are far more financially literate than you!

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is very true. The Nationals are far more financially literate than the Liberal Party. That 2c increase takes us to 47c in the dollar. No state in the history of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, except for Western Australia, has gone below 86c in the dollar. We are now down around half —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr M. McGOWAN: We are now down around half —

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

The SPEAKER: Treasurer!

Mr M. McGOWAN: We are now down around half of what the lowest level of GST or other revenue distributed under the Commonwealth Grants Commission formula has been in history. The member is saying that that is a huge windfall that now says that everything is okay. Is it any wonder that the Liberals and Nationals got this state into such a dire financial position?

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr M. McGOWAN: They are still held in disdain and disgrace around the Western Australian community.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the second time.

MOORA RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE — GST DISTRIBUTION — TREASURER'S COMMENTS

233. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Given the Premier's refusal to overturn his decision to close the college, will he at least travel to Moora and discuss with the community why he cannot give them some share of the government's \$140 million windfall?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I travel all over Western Australia all the time. I was very pleased when Labor built the hospital in Moora.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: When Labor built the hospital in Moora that the former government failed to build, I went there and talked to the community about those issues. I went up there and talked to the community back in the 1990s before the member for Moore's political career was even thought of. I am out there dealing with regional Western Australians all the time, and I am pointing out the great things that this government is doing all over the state and how we have to repair the damage put in place by people opposite during their term in office.

NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK — FIBRE-TO-THE-KERB CONNECTIONS

234. Ms A. SANDERSON to the Minister for Innovation and ICT:

I refer to the announcement by NBN Co that it will roll out fibre-to-the-kerb connections to an extra 440 000 premises across the country. Can the minister advise the house whether any Western Australians will benefit from this announcement; and, if so, how many?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I thank the member for her question. I know that, as the member for Morley, she has been very vocal in taking up the issue of poor internet quality in her electorate.

Yesterday, the federal government announced a newer and more improved version of the NBN—fibre to the kerb—will be rolled out to an additional 440 000 premises across Australia. People will know that the federal government's preferred way of delivering the NBN was through fibre to the node, whereby the fibre stopped at a node in the suburb—it is a bit like a digital horse and cart—rather than the original plan that was put in place by federal Labor to be fibre to the premises.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville, are you talking to yourself or what?

Mr D.J. KELLY: There have been a lot of complaints about the fibre-to-the-node technology. It has been slow to roll out and people have simply not been happy with it. Whether it is trying to get your kids to do their homework or whether a small business is trying to do business, fibre-to-the-node technology has proven to be significantly inferior technology. For the last six months, there has been talk that fibre to the kerb was going to be rolled out. Some people, and constituents in the electorate of Morley, were hopeful that the federal government was now starting to hear complaints about fibre-to-the-node technology and that for the rest of the rollout in WA more fibre to the kerb would be rolled out.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.J. KELLY: I wrote to Senator Mitch Fifield, the federal Minister for Communications, asking to meet with him all last year to urge him to give Western Australians more fibre-to-the-kerb technology. He finally found time last Thursday to meet with me. After a year in office, I said to him, “Are we going to get more fibre-to-the-kerb technology?”

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Members might want to hear this.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, you say something once, it is funny—twice, it is not.

Mr D.J. KELLY: A lot of people in the regions are very unhappy about the standard of the NBN rollout in the regions. I have heard nothing from the National Party about that issue since we came to government. They might want to listen. They say they are representing the people of the regions, even though we have more regional seats than they have in the Parliament.

Mr V.A. Catania: Sit down!

The SPEAKER: You might be standing up and going home soon, member for North West Central. I call you to order for the first time.

Mr D.J. KELLY: When Senator Fifield finally met with me on Thursday and I asked him whether Western Australia was getting more fibre-to-the-kerb technology, he said it would only happen if it was cheaper—so the criterion was not whether it was more superior technology—and that only 70 000 households in Western Australia would get fibre-to-the-kerb technology. In Western Australia, less than five per cent of residents will get fibre to the kerb.

What he did not tell me was that he was going to announce on Monday or Tuesday of this week that an additional 440 000 premises around Australia were going to get fibre to the kerb. He did not mention that at all. When that announcement was made, the question was: is any of it going to come to WA? I have not been able to get clarity on that from his office. *The West Australian* has reported that only 3 000 to 4 000 homes in Western Australia will get fibre-to-the-kerb technology. Less than one per cent of Western Australian households will benefit from the additional 440 000 homes that will get it. Again, Western Australia is being duded.

The outcome of this rollout is that 61 per cent of customers in WA will be relying on fibre-to-the-node technology. That is more than the case in any other state in Australia. In Queensland, the percentage will be 43 per cent; in

New South Wales, it will be 39 per cent; and in Victoria, it will be only 32 per cent. More than double the number of customers in WA will rely on fibre-to-the-node technology rather than fibre to the kerb when compared with Victoria. Western Australia has been seriously duded once again.

What really disappoints and surprises me is that members opposite have said absolutely nothing about this issue since there has been a change of government.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville, we do not have a defibrillator in the house. I call you to order.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I would have thought that members opposite would have been taking this issue up with their federal counterparts in both the Liberal Party and the National Party, but there has been nothing done on it. I have been disappointed that their federal Liberal counterparts like Julie Bishop and Mathias Cormann, likewise have again let Western Australia be duded by the federal government in the rollout of the national broadband network. Their representation has been absolutely hopeless. Members opposite have done absolutely nothing about it, just like when we had the GST rollout and just like the NBN rollout. Members opposite have done absolutely nothing.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, I will not have anyone shouting across the chamber like that. He is entitled to be on his feet. When you get on your feet, you want to be listened to. Make sure you do it for the opposition.

SYNERGY — RENEWABLE ENERGY ASSETS

235. **Mr D.C. NALDER to the Premier:**

During the election, the Premier promised not to sell electricity assets, and he was supported by a campaign bankrolled with millions of dollars from the unions. Can the Premier confirm he has sold 80 per cent of Synergy's unregulated renewable energy assets and how is this different from selling 51 per cent of Western Power?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I will give the member for Bateman a bit of advice. He does not seem to understand that there are ministers responsible for certain things in this house. The member for Bateman has been here for only five years, and it takes a while to learn the ropes—I acknowledge that. Yesterday, he asked the Minister for Tourism about international students when they fall within my portfolio. Today, he has asked me about electricity issues when we have the Minister for Energy sitting right there, waiting to answer the question. I am confused about why the member for Bateman does not seem to be able to learn.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition! Members, please, I want to hear the answer.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I would be more than happy for him to —

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine, here is a tip: you are not funny!

Mr M. McGOWAN: That was funny.

The reality is that we went to the last state election and there was a major campaign —

Mr D.C. Nalder: It was you, wasn't it!

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member asked me a question. If he wants specifics, maybe he should ask the Minister for Energy—he is a very bright fellow, as the member knows.

Mr A. Krsticevic: Brighter than you!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I would agree with the member. He is certainly brighter than you!

We went to the last state election and a major campaign was run around Western Power. Members might recall that over the course of a career of 25 years, the former Premier, Colin Barnett, opposed vigorously the sale of the poles and wires. He ran that argument for his entire public career until right before the last state election when he flipped and said, "No, we'll sell off half of it." The Liberal Party then went quiet on the issue throughout the course of the election campaign. We had a clear position. We said that we were not going to sell Western Power. That remains our position. But I pose the question to members of the Liberal Party: is their position still to sell Western Power?

Dr M.D. Nahan: You just misled the public, didn't you?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Is that their position?

Dr M.D. Nahan: You just lied to the public. You systematically lied to the public.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Is their position still to sell Western Power?

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Leader of the Opposition is using the word “lied”. He said that the Premier lied, and he should withdraw.

The SPEAKER: Will you withdraw?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I did say that. He did systematically lie to the public and I withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: No, no, no! Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the third time. You will do a proper apology.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I withdraw.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr M. McGOWAN: My question to members of the Liberal Party is: do they still propose to sell Western Power? It is an easy question; they can say yes or no. We have expanded the renewable energy capacity of Western Australia. I am a strong supporter of renewable energy. We have expanded the footprint. Synergy has control over it.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you are on three calls. On the next call, you are going home.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is a terrific deal. We are seeing the renewal of wind energy in Albany, Mr Speaker, we have solar energy in Greenough and we have the Warradarge wind farm. We have all sorts of renewables because we support renewables. The Liberals and Nationals do not know if they are Arthur or Martha or a shiver or something else. They do not know where they stand on these issues because they have Tony Abbott out there running the arguments for them. We support the diversity of supply in Western Australia, we support all forms of energy generation in Western Australia and we strongly support renewable energy. I can tell members that we are not selling Western Power.

SYNERGY — RENEWABLE ENERGY ASSETS

236. Mr D.C. NALDER to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. The Premier was the person who made the policy announcements on energy during the election. Is the only difference between selling Synergy assets and selling Western Power assets that the Premier can guarantee funds to the superannuation fund of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union; the Australian Manufacturing Workers’ Union; the Australian Workers’ Union; and the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The answer is clearly no. But it shows the fertile and furious imagination going on inside the member for Bateman’s head. Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition was out there ranting on Twitter. He had a Donald Trump moment: “Socialists! The socialists are out there!” He has to promote his Twitter feed; otherwise, no-one even looks at it. Despite that enormous effort tweeting about socialism, he managed to get five retweets with it being promoted. There is a fevered and furious imagination in the heads of those opposite: “They’re socialists. There’s privatisation; there’s no privatisation.” They are desperately trying to create arguments to justify their position. We know where we stand. We support renewable energy and we are not selling Western Power.

The SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.

CHILD PROTECTION — CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE — ROEBOURNE*Matter of Public Interest*

THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson) informed the Assembly that he was in receipt within the prescribed time of a letter from the member for Hillarys seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

[In compliance with standing orders, at least five members rose in their places.]

MR P.A. KATSAMBANIS (Hillarys) [2.56 pm]: I move —

That this house calls on the Premier to appoint one specific minister, such as the Minister for Police, to take lead responsibility for the protection of victims of child sexual abuse and to update the house on what action is being taken to ensure not one of the 184 victims of child sex abuse in Roebourne are living with an accused or convicted perpetrator of child sex abuse.

I raise this matter in the house today because in our society there can be no greater matter of public interest than the protection, safety and wellbeing of children, particularly vulnerable children. Members of Parliament like talking about human rights. It is an absolute human right for every single child to live in safety and security in their own community, free from the fear of being attacked or abused by anybody. Unfortunately, we know that in

modern society there are serious societal issues that mean that some children will be subjected to this sort of abuse from time to time. We have seen the publicity again this week about how one perpetrator, David Lindner, was able to essentially embed himself into a community in our south west and cause absolutely horrific harm to children in that community. We know about the fact that there are, sadly, 184 victims of child sex abuse living in the community of Roebourne. We also know that living in that community is a large number—I will not put on a number on it today; I heard some numbers around it—of child sex abuse perpetrators or paedophiles. Previously, in this house, I have described these people in terrible terms. They deserve that description; I think they are scumbags. They are the lowest of the low and deserve absolutely no sympathy. The people who deserve sympathy are our children, especially our vulnerable children, but they deserve more than sympathy. They deserve everybody—every single person—acting to provide the appropriate level of protection for them. That involves community, as the Minister for Child Protection said today during question time, but it also involves more than just a community. It involves every single person living in Western Australia and it certainly involves the mechanics of government. The public of Western Australia entrusts the government to provide that level of protection. It is not good enough in this case to say, “Oh, we are using our best endeavours. We are doing the best we can.” We need to leave no stone unturned to protect every single vulnerable child in this state—every single one of them.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister, you will have a chance to speak.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: It is not a solution at all to suggest that we move these children around. Why make the victims suffer? Let it sit on the record that the opposition is certainly not talking about that. We believe that every child should be safe from abuse and violence of all types, including child sex abuse, in the community that they want to live and grow up in. They deserve to live and grow up in their community without the fear of this.

For some time, since the revelations about Roebourne have become public, the opposition in this house and in the other house have pursued information from the government. We have asked questions in this place and the other place of the Minister for Child Protection and the Minister for Police. We have asked those questions because we want an assurance on behalf of the people of Western Australia and the people of Roebourne that if there is a known perpetrator living with children in that community, that the perpetrator be removed. We have been stonewalled at every single level. The Minister for Police, who I have a lot of sympathy for in this matter, said that the police have made inquiries and the police are not aware. She has been very careful with her words and I understand that. She is the Minister for Police. The police are not aware of any such circumstance. But we have seen the publicity and the commentary made by the former Commissioner of Police that he had trouble getting that information, even getting an answer about whether these things were happening. He had trouble. The minister today assured us that the current Commissioner of Police does not have such trouble but has not been told of any such issues. She has been very, very careful with her words in saying that. She has not given an outright assurance.

The Minister for Child Protection today told us—she said this before in answers to questions both here and in the other place—that she has asked questions of her department about whether any of these vulnerable children are being exposed to the dangers of sharing a home with a convicted or accused paedophile, someone who has been charged with an offence and is awaiting trial and sentence. The minister has provided answers that are clearly unsatisfactory. She said that yes, she has asked the questions, and then she waffled on about how she was not going to point the finger at anyone and the like. She has not given the assurance that having asked the questions, she has not received an answer that is positive and that says that none of these children are at risk in those communities today. None of them have to share a house with an accused or convicted paedophile. She has repeatedly refused to provide that assurance, despite Roebourne being a pretty small community and the victims being relatively well known and the perpetrators being very well known within that community.

Point of Order

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I know it is a confusion that the Liberal Party does not suffer from, but we are talking about two ministers, both female, both giving responses. So when the member refers to “she”, it is somewhat confusing. He may well want to call the ministers by their titles to avoid confusion.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member. If you could do that please.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thought I was very clear. I was speaking about the Minister for Child Protection. I think I made that very clear.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I thought you were talking about the Minister for Police.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: I was previously speaking about the Minister for Police. I dealt with that issue and was talking about the Minister for Child Protection. I am sure both ministers are pretty clear because they are listening intently and I thank them for that.

The SPEAKER: I agree with what the member said.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Okay, I will make sure I am very clear in the future. I will make sure.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: The non-answer and the continual refusal to provide an answer by the Minister for Child Protection simply increases the rightful fears that members of our community have that this issue is unfortunately out of control. We do not know whether known perpetrators are living with vulnerable children or worst-case scenario, they are living with vulnerable children.

I will get on to a male minister in a minute, because the Minister for Police made reference to working with the Attorney General. This area crosses a number of portfolios, including Child Protection. I know the people on the ground who do this work in the Department for Child Protection and Family Support are totally and utterly committed to protecting children. I cast no aspersions on them. But systemically, that protection is with the Minister for Child Protection. Collecting data and laying charges against paedophiles lies with the police in the first instance, but then prosecutions, sentencing and all the laws around sentencing primarily lie with the Attorney General. I am not accusing anyone of passing the buck, but it opens up the issue of who has responsibility for what and we saw that today in question time. I asked the Minister for Police whether any of these vulnerable children are exposed. She said that the police have told her they are not aware of any such case. She was very clear, precise and rehearsed in her words—very much so—to make sure that she did not mislead the house. The answer more generally is that the police may not know, but that does not mean it is not happening. The Minister for Child Protection, as I said, has completely and utterly refused to give an assurance that it is not happening. This area is far too important for us to keep bouncing around questions and non-answers for weeks and months on end. We have been going at this since November last year in the other place and in this place. It is far too important. This is not about political grandstanding. This is not about the Labor or Liberal Party, the government or the opposition. This is about the protection of vulnerable children who have the right and expectation, and who deserve to live in their community without a fear of being attacked or of being molested by these evil paedophiles. Whether it is happening in Roebourne, Hillarys, Rockingham, Riverton or any other community across this state, we should be doing our utmost to stamp it out. It should not matter where it is or who those children are. The basic human right to live with dignity and without fear of abuse and attack ought to be extended to every single child in every single community. If we start making exceptions or excuses, then we will expose the most vulnerable children to the highest possible risk. That is why the opposition is pursuing this issue as a matter of public interest today.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: As I was saying before that interruption, every single child in this state and every single child in the world, really, deserves that expectation—the right—to live in their community, no matter where they are, without the risk of being harmed by this sort of evil predator. I accept that the government has a Minister for Police and a Minister for Child Protection but we are today asking the Premier to firstly accept the fact that serious issues are going on. People like Mr Lindner have been grooming children in communities in the south west. There are also ongoing issues in Roebourne and through every single attempt to get information, we have been given less and less information rather than more about whether vulnerable children are being protected. There are also other instances of child sex abuse across our state. A coordinated approach is needed. In this matter of public interest today, the opposition suggests that one minister should be given lead responsibility to protect victims of child sexual abuse and that the minister also update the house on what is happening in Roebourne. Otherwise we get, “Oh, the police minister knows only a little bit” and the Minister for Child Protection is asked questions of her department but will not answer them.

Perhaps government members can think back to the time when they were in opposition. In 2016, I remember when Ryan Clegg was found to be living close to homes and schools in the inner Perth suburb of North Fremantle. In his role as shadow Attorney General, the current Attorney General was absolutely outraged and called for the government and the Director of Public Prosecutions to immediately bring an appeal against the offender, who had been bailed after pleading guilty to 61 child sex offences because, at the time, I think the shadow Attorney General, Mr Quigley, said that the man was living about 60 metres from a school. Mr Quigley was outraged that a known paedophile was living within 60 metres of a school or a childcare centre and in close proximity to homes. He was totally outraged and attacked the government, suggesting that it was in some way giving comfort to paedophiles when we certainly were not. I do not accuse any government of doing that. I think we are all committed to the right outcomes, but we differ on how we get there. Now in government, the fear of a paedophile living in the same house as a young child who has already been abused does not seem to stir the same emotions in either the Attorney General today, the ministers, or the Premier to do something about it. In opposition, they called on the previous government to act immediately. I think in one of his rhetorical flourishes, the current Attorney General called on the government to march into the Supreme Court on Monday morning to put in a writ to stop this guy from living near a school or childcare centre, or near homes. Now they are in government, there is no such urgency from these members.

The Premier might choose to appoint the Minister for Police to be the minister responsible to coordinate this area, which goes beyond just police, beyond the Attorney General and beyond child protection. It covers all those fields.

The Premier could choose the Minister for Child Protection to be responsible. If he so wishes, he could choose the Attorney General to be responsible. In many cases for governments in the past, when an issue is of such major significance with the capacity to involve catastrophic harm for our most vulnerable citizens, Premiers and Prime Ministers have taken it upon themselves to play a coordinating role; perhaps the Premier could even consider that. We need to have a system in which the buck stops with one responsible minister across the board so that government members cannot say one issue is in a child protection area and another is in a police area, or that it is for the Attorney General to decide, because working in silos just does not work.

As I said earlier, this sort of response should not be bound by geography. The issues today are around Roebourne and the communities in the south west where Mr Lindner was acting, but we know that tomorrow or the next day, they could appear in almost any community across Western Australia, whether it is a regional community, a suburban community or a remote community. We need to listen to what some of the community leaders have had to say, and even some Labor Party luminaries. In March this year, Labor Party luminary Graham Richardson wrote an article in *The Australian* that I commend everyone to read, titled “Why don’t we stop looking away when kids are raped?” He makes a number of good points. I quote —

Along with syphilis I can think of no greater evil than child sexual abuse. But we mostly choose to turn away from it, and as long as this conspiracy of silence holds sway, these deaths, these little tragedies, will continue unabated.

We should not look away. Graham Richardson says that we should stop looking away, start looking at the problem and start fixing it. How do we do that? It is by appointing one responsible minister. The government does not have to create a new department, but pick a minister and say, “You’re the coordinator” or a cabinet subcommittee, or something that indicates that this government is taking this serious problem seriously, rather than continuing to provide the community with non-answers. We should not do what Aboriginal activist Jacinta Price says that we do too often. I quote —

This has become the norm for Aboriginal victims of sexual abuse. Put up with it and shut up. The culture of secrecy has allowed vile criminal sexual behaviours to flourish while the human rights of children have been obliterated.

It is well past time for all who are concerned with the welfare of our children to have open, honest and confronting discourse about the truth. No more can we point the finger elsewhere.

That is sage advice from someone who has lived, and I think continues to live, in some of these communities in the Northern Territory. She understands the problem and is not prepared to put up with it or shut up any more. She does not want the finger pointed elsewhere, but wants the problem resolved. We should start listening to these people and we should start acting, because if we do not act, all we do is perpetuate the awful and degrading cycle of child sexual abuse that we often know becomes one of transferring the abuse from the abuser to the person being abused, who, when they grow up, often perpetuate that cycle. We need to put a stop to it. I am not accusing anyone of not caring about this. It is a matter of a coordinated approach to the issue and prioritising it so that it can be fixed, rather than saying, “Trust us, we have got this all under control”, because we do not have it under control. Unless we can get an absolute assurance that no child in Roebourne is exposed to living with a paedophile in their home today or tomorrow or the next day, we do not have that solution. I hope the government acts wisely in this area and starts to take a coordinated approach across departments and agencies, and that the Premier stands up for the rights of children by appointing a coordinating minister who can lead us to solving this difficult but absolutely critical problem.

MR Z.R.F. KIRKUP (Dawesville) [3.20 pm]: It does not give me any pleasure to follow the member for Hillarys in this case talking on this very important issue. I congratulate the nine or so members of the government here listening to the opposition put its concerns to the government today. We have too often read heartbreaking and gut-wrenching stories of what happens right across Western Australia, and indeed other states and territories in the Federation. For too long all of us have borne witness to and read those stories about child sexual abuse of young people—very young ages, two, three and four-year-old children—who have sexually transmitted diseases as a result of being raped. There is no other way of putting it. It is an awful and heartbreaking thought to consider. When the opposition puts its concerns to the government on behalf of the people of Western Australia, when we ask very serious questions that we think deserve an accountable answer in this place, and when we seek assurances that 184 of the child victims in Roebourne are not presently living with convicted or charged offenders, we get nothing but waffle words from the government. We get no certainty at all and no reason to be assured that those children are still not living in those conditions. That is why this matter of public interest has been brought to this place today. It is disappointing because, as the member for Hillarys has said, we all know that everybody in this place would be united in their view to try to do everything possible to stop this occurring in the first place. It is incumbent upon the opposition to ask the government what action has been taken and how we can be assured that 184 innocent child victims of sexual abuse are not continuing to be exposed to that cycle of abuse that occurs today in Roebourne. It is a very serious issue about which we and the community would expect very clear answers from the government. We have asked questions of this government—simple yes and no questions of the ministers

opposite. We have asked the Minister for Child Protection and the Minister for Police whether they can guarantee whether those 184 victims of child sexual abuse were living with any person who had been convicted or accused of child sex offences. The answers required a simple yes or no, but we do not get a simple yes or no response. To be perfectly frank, it seems to me that the ministers opposite choose to try to cloud the issue at every turn. They give extensive answers that do not provide any real certainty or surety to the opposition or the people of Western Australia that there is not a single person living with a convicted or alleged perpetrator of child sexual offences. It is awful.

I recall that when government members were in opposition, they would often moralise the government of the day with individual cases, demanding ministerial intervention in those individual cases. It seems to me that if they had those high moral standards in opposition, they should take them into government, but unfortunately that does not seem to be the case. On the front page of *The West Australian* there is an article by Tim Clarke, legal affairs editor, with the headline “Why Hasn’t this Monster Stopped?” That is a very good question that *The West Australian* put. We have been asking the question about what the government is doing to stop those same monsters in Roebourne today. Unfortunately, it disappoints all of us on this side that the government has not been forthcoming with those answers. It does not matter whether the victim is living in Roebourne, Rockingham, Riverton or wherever they might be. All of us here would expect that those victims deserve equal protection. It seems to be unusual that Operation Fledermaus found that 36 men in the community of Roebourne were charged with more than 300 offences on 184 child victims. That is 19 per cent of the population of Roebourne. In 2016, the population of Roebourne was 981 and there were 184 child victims. If any other community in Western Australia had nearly 20 per cent of the population being victims of child sex offences, the Army would be marching in there and stamping down on what is happening in that community. Yet, when we ask simple questions of this government about whether children are still living with those who perpetrate —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, you have the opportunity to talk. No interjections, please.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: When we ask the government simple questions about whether those child victims are being protected or whether they are still residing with those who commit child sex offences, we do not get a clear response at all. This is absolutely concerning to the opposition; it absolutely concerns all Western Australians. I back what the member for Hillarys has said. We absolutely expect a single minister to be held responsible for this, a single minister intervening in this case, because if it was any other community in Western Australia, I suspect there would be far greater intervention than what is occurring now, which is blind ignorance of the issues associated with Roebourne.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection) [3.26 pm]: I am very pleased to speak on this matter, but not because it gives me any pleasure to have to respond to these terrible situations. I am sure that people across the chamber are appalled at the extent of child sex abuse revealed through Operation Fledermaus. In fact, the reports from the police are that we can expect high levels of child sexual abuse throughout families and communities in other areas in regional Western Australia, and perhaps even the metropolitan area. We are going to continue to do that work to try to uncover that sexual abuse, whether it is in the Pilbara or anywhere else, and also to make sure we have an effective response. That is what we are debating today—what an effective response is to the revelation that there is extensive child sexual abuse in one particular extended community, being the West Pilbara.

People talk about Roebourne. Roebourne is a central area where people come and go, but in their early briefings to me and other ministers, the police were clear that this issue was not particular to Roebourne. We need to understand the circumstances in which this confused, dysfunctional, disturbing and obviously illegal and damaging behaviour is occurring. I have been asked in question time whether I can give guarantees that no child is at risk in Roebourne or anywhere outside of Roebourne and, as I said before, I wish I could give guarantees. In fact, a huge number of children are under the age of 18 in this state—over 625 000—and I wish I could give guarantees about all of them, but of course I cannot. What I can do is make sure that the public servants I have responsibility for in the Department of Communities, particularly those doing child protection work, are properly resourced on the ground in those areas with particular vulnerabilities. I will ensure that they are working in lockstep with other service providers, particularly the Western Australia Police Force, juvenile justice workers, not-for-profit groups and community leaders active on the ground to understand what risky behaviours occur and what risks children might be exposed to and how to remove and properly address those risks. When I say that child safety is a whole-of-community responsibility, it is not a glib comment or a throwaway line. It is a sophisticated understanding of the need for us all to be mindful that if we think that child safety will be achieved by the police coming in by way of cavalry and Department for Child Protection and Family Support and government officials coming in and working on the ground and that will be enough, it is never enough. We need to arm families and communities and make sure that everyone understands that they have one eye out for the welfare for all children in their community. That is what we are endeavouring to do in Roebourne. Having said that, we understand that there are immediate issues of child safety and we are very much alert to that.

We have increased Department for Child Protection and Family Support resources on the ground. The department is working very closely with the police. I commend the police, particularly those who worked at the beginning of Operation Fledermaus; they worked closely with child protection workers, and it was that closeness in working together that meant people came forward with those cases as they did. We want to make sure that we are working with the community to empower it so that if there are cases in the future, people feel confident to come forward and to talk about those cases knowing that they will be responded to properly and not demonised. We do not need a hysterical response from government and the general public. We need an effective response that endures in the long run. We need to build up and empower that community and acknowledge that community safety is the way that we truly guarantee child safety in the long run. I have been up there. I think our machinery-of-government changes—which were designed to have a more coordinated response between Department of Housing and Department for Child Protection and Family Support—and the cabinet subcommittee looking at community safety working with Department of Justice and police and the like all feed into that work.

I will respond by going through the “West Pilbara Plan”, which again is not something that occurs out there as blue-sky thinking or a theoretical response. It is a practical response that is immediate and has a sense of urgency, and involves capacity building and strengthening the community. I refer to the shrill claim by the speaker before me, the member for Dawesville, that if we know this sort of child abuse is going on, we should call in the Army. How did that go in the Northern Territory, member?

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member!

Ms S.F. McGURK: People think that if they call for some sort of intervention or emergency response whereby the cavalry and the emergency services come in and sweep up children and hold them in their arms, everything will be okay. I wish that were the case. However, we have to work with the community and empower those families and the community. We have to hold perpetrators to account, and we are absolutely doing that. Demonising that community and criticising it and saying that it is the community’s fault that those children have not been kept safe —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms S.F. McGURK: — will only drive the problem further underground, and that is not what we want. Some of the responses —

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

The SPEAKER: I thought it was very good that when this side of the house spoke, there were very few interjections, so I would like the same opportunity to be given to the minister.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I have been up to Roebourne three times and spoken with a number of community elders and leaders there—mostly women, but not only women—about what in their experience they would like to see change. People may have heard me say it before, but the first time I went up, some of the women said to me, “You are the sixth minister who’s come up here and asked us what we thought. Perhaps you want to listen to us and then implement some of the things we tell you.” That seemed to me to be a completely reasonable request.

We were given community rules identified by the elders and what is called the Balagarni 10, the community strategies to address child abuse and trauma by the community. We were given that. A number of community initiatives have then been picked up in our “West Pilbara Plan”. That includes having a cultural centre that is a healing place where family and health can be looked at. Perhaps drug and alcohol abuse counselling and culturally led healing strategies can be used so that people understand what is and is not acceptable in traditional culture in that area. We will have a one-stop shop where government services are at one counter so that people can come in and know where they can get help and assistance in one easily accessible place. We have committed to put in place 10 supported safe houses in the community. They will not be refuges, but they will be supported households where, for instance, if some of the elder women are already caring for a number of children who go there late at night and those women need a larger house, they will be supported to move to a larger house and given extra food and resources and support to make sure that they can provide the support in an ongoing way. They are already providing that now, but they are stretched.

We support initiatives such as the police and community youth centre, which is doing some really good work on the ground as it does in many communities. The night patrol is focused now on children and getting children off the streets late at night and taking them somewhere that is safe. We will have a refuge for men so that when there is violence and abuse in the house, the women and children do not have to leave, but the perpetrators have to leave and take some time out to get sober and straight. We are putting those initiatives in place. A number of requests that were put through to us that I am happy to say were part of our “West Pilbara Plan”. We have not put in place everything that the community asked for. Some of the responses that we have put in place the community did not

ask for, but I think together it is designed to be a respectful response that is not doing something to the community, but doing something with the community and trying to build its capacity. That is not woolly social worker nice-feeling sentiment. That is genuinely listening to those people in the community who want to build a safe and secure environment in which kids are going to school, growing happily and securely, studying, playing sport, have good social connections and have safe people to talk to if they have concerns. After school, as they grow older, they have an expectation that they will train or get work. They are all the things that everyone wants for young people in their community. That is what all of us as local members and the member for Pilbara want for people living in Roebourne and west Pilbara.

We are committed to continuing to look at practical employment strategies on the ground so that there is meaningful employment in that community and more people working and able to bring home an income. We want more engagement at school. Currently, there is low engagement. We want a more meaningful connection with the school environment. As I am saying some of these things, I notice the member for Dawesville shaking his head as if these are theoretical matters and we should be concerned only about child safety. I met with Mick Gooda, who people might know ran the Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory about the Don Dale Centre and was previously the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, a position now held by June Oscar. He had just been up to Roebourne and I met with him afterwards to talk about what he thought were the priorities in establishing a healthy community in the west Pilbara. He said that he thought that we have got the balance right of making sure the message to the community that child safety will not be compromised is unequivocal and clear. These are illegal acts and perpetrators will be held to account and we are determined to put that to effect. However, we also have to make sure this empowerment is led by the community and is not something done to them but is done in partnership with them. Unless we do that, I fear history will just repeat itself. A patronising, paternalistic attitude has not worked in the past and there is no reason to think that outside intervention will be effective in either the short or long term. That is why I am determined to work with women leaders in the community and those who want change, such as Violet Samson, Pansy Hicks and Nellie Connors, and male leaders such as David Walker and Patrick Churnside, whom I have met up there, and people from the Mawarnkarra Health Service, the Aboriginal health service up there—services on the ground day in and day out to make sure people understand that child safety is not negotiable. Of course we think that, but we want to build that message in the community and not in a patronising, paternalistic way, which, if we are not careful, will drive the problem underground and exacerbate feelings of powerlessness and frustration and a sense of the future being futile for that community. That is what I want to avoid.

I was very pleased to have a positive response from Mick Gooda after we had announced the west Pilbara plan, as we did from Dr Hannah McGlade, a Noongar academic woman who works at Curtin University and who has been very, very passionate about child safety in Aboriginal communities and has spoken out against child sex abuse. I have spent quite a bit of time with Hannah McGlade seeking to understand some of the issues. She said that she thought we have got the balance right of calling out bad behaviour, making sure people understand they are illegal acts that will not be tolerated. There will not be any sort of working around and hiding from the real issues, but at the same time we need to empower that community if we want to achieve change in the long run. That is the balance we are trying to strike in Roebourne. I wish that I could say that every child in Roebourne will be protected against sex abuse. I wish I could say that about over 600 000 children in Western Australia, but we need a more sophisticated understanding about child safety. If the royal commission taught us anything, it is to understand that we need laws, systematic response and a deep community buy-in to understand where children are unsafe and how to instil protective behaviours within our everyday life.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland — Minister for Police) [3.43 pm]: I believe the motion the opposition has put before the house this afternoon is somewhat misguided and simplistic. It is attempting to come up with a very simple solution to a very complex and entrenched issue. It is a superficial idea and a superficial response to an incredibly complex area. In effect, the opposition's suggestion by way of this motion would create another silo. Having someone singly responsible is not the way ahead. The way ahead is for a whole-of-government collaborative approach, although people might ask: what does that matter; what will it deliver? I think both the Minister for Child Protection and I are able to enunciate what it is delivering for the Roebourne community.

[Quorum formed.]

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: As has been acknowledged by members of the former government, much child abuse is familial abuse and that creates necessary constraints in identifying offenders because in identifying offenders, we also identify victims. This was pointed out numerous times by ministers in the former government. Child abuse in remote and regional communities, particularly in Indigenous communities, is something that Labor governments have for a long time been focused on addressing. When we were last in government, post the Sue Gordon report, the Gallop government rolled out the multifunctional police facilities. That was a comprehensive investigation and report by Sue Gordon and members of that committee. They concluded, quite rightly, that we needed a comprehensive response; we needed agencies working together, not in silos. That is why those multifunctional police stations were put in place. In the first instance, we put in place nine of them throughout regional areas in Western Australia, including places like Balgo and the Dampier Peninsula. The former federal Liberal

government, through Mal Brough, the minister at the time, recognised how worthwhile this approach was. That is why when some funding flowed to the Northern Territory, we got some federal funding for three more of these multifunctional police stations in Western Australia so that child protection officers in communities and other agencies could work side by side with police on location in these communities. It is only by government agencies working together towards one common result that we can get results. If we continue to work in silos and have police charging and locking up people, we are not dealing holistically with the issue. That is why the most effective way is not to deal with it in silo but to deal with it comprehensively.

I turn my attention now to Roebourne. The member for Dawesville probably was not born when some of the key issues in Roebourne that affect people's thinking occurred. For people who are as old as I am, the memory of what occurred in Roebourne lock-up with John Pat resonates very strongly. I think it is something the Roebourne community has not yet come to terms with. In September 1983, at the age of 16 years and 11 months, John Pat died in a police lock-up. Prior to and since that time, there have been issues of trust and mistrust of police and levels of dysfunction in that and other communities. Restoring that trust and working together with Indigenous communities, particularly the Roebourne community, has not been easy at all. I think it is appropriate that the Department of Communities is the lead agency. Police have their role to play and are 100 per cent behind the Pilbara trauma response plan. Particularly in the case of Roebourne, I can see why having police as the lead agency would not be appropriate. Roebourne is not the only Indigenous community that has had those issues with police from an earlier era. Our Pilbara police are working very strongly and very collaboratively with the Indigenous community there now. In building that relationship and a greater level of trust, Operation Fledermaus has led to many disclosures. Resources have gone into providing specialist child interviewers and the like, and through a whole range of activities police have gradually built up trust to the extent that we have the disclosures we have. As a result, people are being charged and put through the courts.

Pilbara detectives have received disclosures of child sexual abuse in the communities of Roebourne, Cheeditha, Five Mile, Wickham and Karratha. Those families are all from areas where people would be frequenting Karratha and the Pilbara police districts. Pilbara detectives have also utilised youth community intervention officers—police call them YCIOs—so they were able to gain significant community support to be able to investigate those crimes. Through working together, the districts were able to develop a relationship of trust to be able to investigate these child sexual abuse matters.

The Department of Communities is actively engaging with children who were in contact with those known offenders and conducting child assessment interviews. Pilbara detectives liaise very closely with the Department of Communities to progress those specialised child interviews, and a lot of disclosures have been made by children who are at risk. I do not think anyone is in disagreement here. These are the most serious of matters. Our government takes them very seriously. It is not about chest thumping; it is about working together in the long term to get comprehensive solutions to complex problems to bring people who have offended to justice and to provide the required support to victims. That is why we need a holistic approach, and not an approach in silos.

Pilbara detectives continue to meet with Aboriginal elders and members of the community. They are 100 per cent committed to working with those elders and the community in conjunction with the Department of Communities. I add that Commissioner Dawson made Roebourne a priority when he first became Commissioner of Police in September last year. I received advice that Commissioner Dawson went to Roebourne with Deputy Commissioner Gary Dreierbergs and other key members of government. They attended both Karratha and Roebourne in the Pilbara on 13 September last year, which I think was effectively the commissioner's first week on the job, to look at those community concerns in Roebourne. I understand that he went there on 14 December with Mr Graeme Searle and the Department of Communities. I think collaboration and cooperation is essential to resolving these issues and in supporting the community in the longer term.

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.54 pm]: I rise to speak to the motion put by the opposition and to congratulate it for putting this matter of public importance motion to Parliament. It is probably one of the most important matters it has put forward in the last 12 months. It is good to see the opposition using its time usefully.

I am pleased to say that the government is happy to be held to account on this issue because the actions that we have put in place, led by the current Minister for Child Protection, are entirely appropriate. One of the first things we did as a government was to establish a cabinet subcommittee for community safety and family support. The government understands that complex social issues require a coordinated approach with all the ministers in the room and on the same page, which that cabinet subcommittee helps to facilitate. That subcommittee will look at a range of issues, including child protection, the West Pilbara plan, the meth strategy, Target 120 and juvenile justice. A whole range of issues are all interconnected. One member opposite asked whether we had a cabinet subcommittee. I am glad to report that we do, and that it is operating to deal with this as a matter of urgency, as it should. This issue in the West Pilbara did not happen overnight; it is a result of years of social disadvantage and dysfunction. Members opposite were in government for nine and a half years —

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: Eight and a half!

Ms A. SANDERSON: They were in government for eight and a half years. I stand corrected.

It is not as though we woke up on 17 March and all of a sudden there was an issue in Roebourne. This has been going on for a long time. It is a little galling to hear the outrage from the other side. This is about housing, jobs, drugs, and alcohol as well as sexual abuse. It is a complex issue, and all those issues need to be seriously tackled. One of the strong recommendations from the Gordon report was that building capacity in Aboriginal communities was the way to tackle these issues and improve the quality of life in those communities. The minister should be congratulated for implementing a program that will build capacity in those communities. That is the way that we will deal with this issue.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse) [3.57 pm]: I would also like to contribute to this debate. First and foremost, this issue is about the protection of children in Western Australia, regardless of the community in which they live. In *The West Australian* today the question was asked: “Why wasn’t this monster stopped?” That is a fair question, and we are no closer to having an answer. In the house today I asked whether the Minister for Police could confirm whether the system is broken. As the member for Vasse, I am part of the Busselton and Yallingup communities, where David Lindner, who was recently charged with 58 serious sexual offences, was residing and was promoted on page 3 of the local paper as being a great community advocate. I have some appreciation of the hurt and the destruction that the behaviour of a sexual offender can have when he is grooming a community and the impact they can have on the lives of the victim and the victim’s family. But that is only one sexual predator.

In Roebourne, we know that there are at least 36 paedophiles and that 184 children were molested according to the 2016 census. As the opposition, we ask that the buck stops with one minister. We are not seeking guarantees of safety, but guarantees that perpetrators are not living in the same houses as children. That is a fair question, given that one in five of the population is molested. It is fair enough that we ask that the buck stops with one minister, that further action is taken, and that the government acknowledges that the system is broken.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney) casting his vote with the ayes, with the following result —

Ayes (15)

Mr I.C. Blayney
Dr D.J. Honey
Mr P. Katsambanis
Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup

Mr A. Krsticevic
Mr S.K. L’Estrange
Mr R.S. Love
Mr W.R. Marmion

Mr J.E. McGrath
Dr M.D. Nahan
Mr D.C. Nalder
Mr K. O’Donnell

Mr D.T. Redman
Mr P.J. Rundle
Ms L. Mettam (*Teller*)

Noes (37)

Ms L.L. Baker
Dr A.D. Buti
Mr R.H. Cook
Ms J. Farrer
Mr M.J. Folkard
Ms J.M. Freeman
Ms E. Hamilton
Mr T.J. Healy
Mr M. Hughes
Mr W.J. Johnston

Mr D.J. Kelly
Mr F.M. Logan
Mr M. McGowan
Ms S.F. McGurk
Mr K.J.J. Michel
Mr S.A. Millman
Mr Y. Mubarakai
Mr M.P. Murray
Mrs L.M. O’Malley
Mr P. Papalia

Mr S.J. Price
Mr D.T. Punch
Mr J.R. Quigley
Ms M.M. Quirk
Mrs M.H. Roberts
Ms C.M. Rowe
Ms R. Saffioti
Ms A. Sanderson
Ms J.J. Shaw
Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski

Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms S.E. Winton
Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr D.R. Michael (*Teller*)

Pairs

Ms M.J. Davies
Mrs L.M. Harvey

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke
Mr J.N. Carey

Question thus negatived.

ALBANY WAVE ENERGY PROJECT

Motion

MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [4.04 pm]: I move —

That this house establish a special inquiry, similar to the Langoulant inquiry, to investigate —

- (1) the probity, governance and financial decision-making for the Albany wave farm;
- (2) Minister MacTiernan’s close personal relationship with Carnegie and her failure to declare any perceived or actual conflicts of interest;
- (3) taxpayer costs of at least \$15.75 million for a project that only produces enough power for 200 homes for one year; and
- (4) the lack of a business case for the project.

We have flagged with the government that the Carnegie Albany wave farm will be the focus of the opposition over the coming months and years, because, quite frankly, this project smells. The more that we lift the lid on this project, the worse it looks. It is creating a tough task for the Minister for Energy and how he deals with this project, particularly the Minister for Regional Development's connections prior to her again becoming a member of Parliament. We have serious fundamental underlying concerns about that.

First, let me recap what we know about the project. The project's description is outlined in a document obtained under freedom of information; namely, a Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development draft document, entitled "Financial Assistance Agreement: Royalties for Regions Project: State of Western Australia and Carnegie Clean Energy Limited", version 1.0, September 2017. I will read a couple of points from the project description —

As a broad overview, the scope of this Project (to be undertaken over a period of four years) will comprise:

- Installation of a large scale wave energy converter device capable of delivering greater than 1MW
- Installation to take place in 2019 off the southern coast, in close proximity to the Albany Wind Farm;
- The device will be operational for a period of at least 12 months;
- operation of a large scale prototype that will produce electrical power into the SWIS electrical grid; and
- a legacy of common user infrastructure upon complex of the prototype testing.

The Labor government has negotiated a contract with Carnegie for one megawatt of energy for one year. According to the government's response in the Legislative Council, one megawatt of energy will power only about 200 homes. The government has committed \$15.75 million of taxpayer funds to produce enough energy to power 200 homes for one year. Members do not have to be rocket scientists to know that this is an extremely poor return for taxpayers. However, the story of the Carnegie wave farm gets much, much more interesting, hence the need for this motion.

First, what do we know about this project? Carnegie Clean Energy will deliver a technology called CETO 6. What is interesting from our investigation is that Carnegie is already delivering the same CETO 6 technology on Garden Island. Why is the government providing Carnegie \$15.75 million of taxpayers' money to deliver a project that already has been delivered? I will say more about that in a moment.

It is a matter of record that the former Liberal government provided funding to Carnegie for wave energy in Albany. However, the big difference is that that was over a decade ago when wave energy was a new and emerging technology, as was wind and solar for that matter. Once again, why has the McGowan government provided \$15.75 million of taxpayer funds to Carnegie Clean Energy for a technology at the commercialisation stage? Around \$15.75 million of taxpayers' money will be spent on a one-megawatt power station with enough capacity for 200 homes for one year. The money is going to a company that is already demonstrating the same technology on Garden Island without any state government funds. This now leads to some information that we have obtained through the Freedom of Information Act to do with the total cost of this project. It may surprise some members that although this project will take \$15.75 million of state funds, it accounts for only 24 per cent of the total cost of the project. There is also an ARENA CETO 6 grant of \$11.7 million and Carnegie cash-on-hand or debt and equity for \$37.8 million for 58 per cent of the project. The total cost is \$65 447 000, of which roughly \$13.5 million is for design and development, \$39.5 million is for capital expenditure, \$2.5 million is for operations, maintenance and decommissioning, and \$10 million is for payroll and administration. That adds up to \$65.5 million.

Dr M.D. Nahan: How much for payroll?

Mr D.C. NALDER: Payroll and administration was \$10 million. I think someone in there might be on some pretty high wages.

Having some experience in project finance, I find this one unbelievable. As shadow Treasurer and shadow Minister for Energy, I find this unbelievable. The Minister for Regional Development has negotiated a deal with Carnegie Clean Energy for a one megawatt project that will cost \$65 million. As a comparison, that represents a cost of \$325 000 to provide enough electricity for just one home for just one year. It would be cheaper for the government to buy 200 people in Albany a house in Albany than to supply their house with energy for one year. It is interesting that Carnegie is also investing \$37.8 million of its own debt and equity into this project. It begs the question: why? It is hard to fathom the logic behind that. It does not make sense to me. It is costing almost \$38 million for a project that will deliver only one megawatt of energy for only one year. I thought to myself that this would have to be the most expensive power station in the world, which led me to do a bit of research. When I googled "world's most expensive power station", the Hinkley Point nuclear power station came up. It is a \$29 billion nuclear power station and, interestingly, it is the first in the United Kingdom since 1995, but it generates 3 200 megawatts of energy.

Dr M.D. Nahan: A year.

Mr D.C. NALDER: A year, so it is very large. However, I thought it would be interesting to work out the cost of the world's most expensive power station on a per megawatt basis to make a direct comparison. It works out that at Hinkley Point it costs \$9 million to generate one megawatt at Hinkley Point. At the Carnegie Albany wave farm it costs \$65 million to generate one megawatt, which is almost six times more expensive than the most expensive power station on the planet! The total cost of Hinkley Point is obviously much greater, but I throw down the gauntlet to the Minister for Regional Development to find a power station in the world that is more expensive on a per-megawatt basis. I will put it out there, pretty comfortably, that this is a waste of taxpayers' money. The project to ascertain wave energy was established down in Albany over a decade ago under the former Liberal government, but at the request of Carnegie it was relocated to Garden Island because it believed that was a better place. That was allowed, the project went ahead and wave energy has been delivered to Garden Island. Why are we paying such a large amount of money to undertake research that has already been undertaken? Given that we know that Hon Alannah MacTiernan sat on the board of Carnegie just before she re-entered politics, it begs another question. The fact that this was announced during the election and before any business case or tender process, begs another question. What we have since seen is that after Labor announced the Carnegie project, it went through a quasi-tendering process to further announce Carnegie's involvement. This starts to smell seriously. I want to be clear to the house: taxpayers are giving \$15.75 million to a commercial company for a commercial project so that it can retain all the profits from the electricity produced, because we know that Carnegie will be allowed to sell energy into the market. Not one single electron from this project will go to a Western Australian home. Synergy has no off-take agreement, and the Minister for Energy has confirmed this, for the small amount of energy produced by Carnegie. This further reinforces that this is a waste of taxpayers' money.

I want to go back to the Minister for Regional Development, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, and her cosy relationship with Carnegie. As I said, we know that she was a previous director of Energy Made Clean, which was bought out by Carnegie Clean Energy. We also know that she was at the announcement with the Premier, with Carnegie, during the election campaign before she was even elected to Parliament.

Dr M.D. Nahan: No, Carnegie was not with them. They made the announcement without Carnegie. I was with Carnegie at that time.

Mr D.C. NALDER: I stand corrected. We know that during the election, the now Minister for Regional Development, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, was with the Premier of Western Australia announcing the Carnegie wave energy farm. She had no clear role because she was not in government. The only role she had was to broker the deal between Carnegie and the Labor Party.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Was she on the board at the time?

Mr D.C. NALDER: That is a good question. Carnegie was clearly of the view that it had locked in a deal because it told the ASX as much. Here we have an interesting scenario where Carnegie has made the announcement to the stock exchange prior to a business case and prior to a tender process. Once government was formed, it went through a tender process and awarded the project to Carnegie, but Carnegie had already announced it to the ASX before this process—it smells.

On 23 February 2017, following the McGowan government's election commitment, Carnegie made the announcement to the ASX stating that it —

... is pleased to advise that the Western Australian ... Labor party has committed \$19.5 million to fund a Wave Project and a Centre of Excellence in Albany ...

The announcement goes on to state —

Associated with Carnegie's Albany Wave Project is the establishment of the Wave Energy Centre of Excellence in collaboration with the University of Western Australia's Oceans Institute and Albany Campus. The Centre ... will draw together the capabilities of Carnegie's world leading CETO technology and existing Australian and international research relationships.

This was announced before the election, on 23 February. Before the election we had an announcement that Carnegie would be, upon Labor winning the election, granted a contract with the state and, furthermore, a relationship would be established with the University of Western Australia. I hope others start to wonder how the cart got in front of the horse with this project. When we look at due process around contracts, tendering and business cases, and, working through that due process to ensure that it stacks up economically and financially and there is the appropriate probity over the processes, one starts to question whether or not this one has failed on a number of tests.

On 13 March 2017, following the election of the McGowan government, Carnegie made another announcement to the ASX confirming the commitment of \$19.5 million, which seems to have changed to \$15.75 million, for its Albany wave energy project. Carnegie Clean Energy even announced to the market that it is now undertaking further consultation with the local community, industry and other stakeholder groups, as well as further regulatory

approvals sought, including environmental approvals, planning consent and grid connection approvals. It is clear that the McGowan government had already done a deal with Carnegie before the election. Then we saw a sham tender process that delivered the very outcome that Carnegie announced to the market on 23 February and 13 March 2017. What other concerns do we have about the probity and decision-making process on this project? We know that the minister did not excuse herself from decision-making on the project despite clearly having a perceived or actual conflict of interest due to her previous position. We have also uncovered that she is funding the feasibility for a solar plant at Kalgoorlie where Carnegie Clean Energy is already in negotiation for the lease of the land. This is extending beyond a wave energy farm. It begs the question about whether the Minister for Energy is aware of this and the extent to which it goes. It smells like another predetermined project for Carnegie at taxpayers' expense. Furthermore, every other energy project has to pay for its own pre-feasibility studies. The Minister for Regional Development is establishing that taxpayers are paying for the feasibility and Carnegie is seeking out the lease for the land. If this does not smell, I do not know what does. Importantly, in the process she has bypassed any coordinated approach to the efficient delivery of energy in WA.

I go back to the motion. We are obviously extremely concerned about not only this project, but also the close links the Minister for Regional Development has with the company. However, it is clear that many questions need to be asked and I am sure Carnegie's shareholders will ask their own questions, as will the Auditor General. The McGowan government has recently delivered the Langoulant inquiry and has supported all its recommendations except those in relation to royalties for regions. We are calling on the house to adopt the standards established by the Langoulant inquiry. We would like the house to establish a special inquiry that can scrutinise this murky deal; all we are asking of the government is to meet the same standards that it set the previous government and the same standard that it has publicly set for itself. As I have said, this is a murky deal that stinks. The Labor government has an unenviable record over many generations of these types of grubby deals, stemming back to WA Inc, and over the coming months and years the opposition will be unpeeling this deal.

Mr P. Papalia: Why did you take two directors-general to the Chinese consulate for dinner? Sorry, did I interrupt your flow of thought?

Mr D.C. NALDER: No, it is fascinating that the minister is trying to divert —

Mr P. Papalia: Did you have a business in China at that time?

Mr D.C. NALDER: No.

Mr P. Papalia: Did your partner have a business in China at that time?

Mr D.C. NALDER: I did not have a business in China at that time; I had no business in China. The minister can try to divert attention from the grubby deal all he likes, but we will continue to push for a complete audit on this project, along with the other renewable energy projects being pushed around regional Western Australia, because the government has made other questionable commitments: the biomass plant and the solar plant in Collie and discussions on solar thermal. It is all over the shop. We know that the Minister for Regional Development has established her own energy subcommittee within Regional Development. I would like to know and think that the Minister for Energy is aware of this. If he is aware, I would like to know what his response to it is, because it brings into question his integrity and credibility in this house. This issue has been acknowledged in the past. The member for Warren–Blackwood raised the issue about the capacity of Western Power to take the energy from the wave energy farm into the junction box and that the capacity does not exist. This does not take into account further upgrades in transmission and so forth that need to be undertaken. This \$65 million for this project is purely for the generation of the energy, yet there are gaps over other aspects within the supply chain of delivering that energy through.

Mr W.R. Marmion interjected.

Mr D.C. NALDER: The commitment under the contract that we received under freedom of information is that the energy needs to be delivered for only 12 months. It needs to be greater than one megawatt but the minimum is one megawatt.

Some big questions have been tabled. We will continue to prosecute and investigate this matter. We will continue to question the government over the probity and due diligence that has been undertaken. We will see whether the government lives up to the standards that it holds the former government to and whether it is prepared to live up to those same standards itself. The tests are there.

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood) [4.26 pm]: I thank the shadow Minister for Energy for the chance to talk on this motion. As members will be aware, on a number of occasions I have raised issues about this project. It is worth going over a few of those points again because it reinforces the issues that the opposition is trying to bring to bear with the government. There are a number of concerns with how this project has come about—notably from the position that the government took to the election as we flow through now to the fiscal pressures that the Treasurer talks about every day in this place—and what this project, as part of the Labor Party's commitment in Albany, is delivering, which is minimal. There are blocks of information; I have picked up two blocks of freedom of information documents. I am sure the member for Bateman has his little block over there. It yields quite a bit of interesting information about how things have been worked through to get to this point.

I will go through the history of the current Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food. Prior to this term of government, she was a minister in the former Labor Party government. She has a history with the company we are talking about, Carnegie Clean Energy. When she was Minister for Lands she ensured that it had a footprint on the ground underneath the ocean, south of Albany, in order to do its activity. She has a history going back to 2008 and was involved with the policy development. I am absolutely sure of that, because if there is one thing I will grant to the Minister for Regional Development, it is that she is massively passionate about renewable energy and wave energy in particular. We probably do not get quite the same level of passion from the Minister for Energy or the Premier, because they are a little concerned about where this issue has gone. They are in no position to articulate it in this place, but I am sure that that level of angst sits underneath the surface. I am pretty certain that the fingers of the current minister are all over the policy development prior to the election. She was a part of the launch, not even being the shadow Minister for Energy, and had no formal political standing at that point; she was simply an election candidate. Nevertheless, she was at the launch of the Labor Party's position in and around this project. The campaign position for the member for Albany was that Albany will have this wave energy project that will contribute to its renewable energy footprint and will have everyone's lights coming on.

I am sure the people who voted for that position felt strongly that if they voted for the Labor Party, and in this case the current member for Albany, they would get something that significantly contributed to their energy needs in that area. What did they get? What has changed? This Labor Party has come into government—the McGowan government—and the minister is the Minister for Regional Development. The election was on 11 March and we did not get even to the end of that month before conversations happened, which have come through in freedom of information claims, to say that the minister would be in charge of the wave project. It is the energy portfolio; the Minister for Energy is sitting right here as the Treasurer, but within less than a month the Minister for Regional Development signalled her intent to take charge of the project. That is confirmed in an email that was sent from the South West Development Commission to the minister's office. In September the same year, that was formalised in an exchange of letters, so we know right from the outset that her hand went up and she said, "I want to be a part of this project", which again signals this enthusiasm. We are talking here about enthusiasm that is driven from beyond a reasonable position for how a government should run the process and, therefore, this project needs a level of investigation that goes beyond what we are able to do in opposition regarding these claims. In our view, these issues need a bit more than the average, cursory look; someone needs to have a closer look.

What are the issues? The minister took charge of the project, which she signalled very early on she would do. She also told the department that she is in charge and that it would be her number one project. Despite all the other things that the Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food might do in Western Australia, the wave farm was her number one project. I am pretty certain that I would not run my priorities like that, but that is how it is. As the member for Bateman already mentioned, there is a history of the minister being formally involved with a subsidiary of the company that is doing the project; that history is there. A range of other issues emerged that suggest perhaps the project has not been thought through. We know that Western Power was unable to hook up into the substation because it did not have the capacity. I think Western Power own that infrastructure and it said, "No; go away. Don't use this. We're not going to compromise what the wind farm produces." When the Treasurer spoke in this place on this before, we heard that in fact the wave farm will produce only one megawatt, and therefore it may be able to be connected. In fact, I have heard that from Carnegie Clean Energy itself, which said, "There are no problems because it is only one megawatt so we are happy to shut it down because it will not compromise the wind farm."

At a maximum, the wave farm will handle only a trial-based project. It will not handle anything beyond a trial, which is totally in conflict with what the government took to the election. Again, more issues emerged. Who will purchase the power? In this place, the Treasurer said that it will go to market. It will probably be the most expensive power the market will come across. It is heavily subsidised if we include the money that the government has put into the project. The issue of who will purchase the power for that period is probably academic because, as the member for Bateman said, whatever one megawatt sells for will probably not make or break a \$60 million project. It would probably be happy to pump it in for nothing. I am not sure whether that is a make or break issue.

Another thing is that in the procurement process to determine who would deliver the project, amongst about only three companies identified in Western Australia that could do it, the early signals were that if the project was pitched at \$14.5 million, Carnegie would not be able to take up the project, so in fact, it was lifted. The range went from I think \$15.5 million to \$16.5 million, which allowed Carnegie to be a participant. A bit of re-tweaking occurred, I am sure at the direction of the minister, to ensure that Carnegie would pick up this project, which was mentioned in dispatches all the time. In fact, if members read the paperwork, Carnegie is mentioned all over the place. Well before it was even the proponent, it is mentioned in the briefing notes in the history, in emails that go back and forth, and in reference from the current Minister for Energy's office to say it would like Carnegie to be taken out of a statement because it suggests there might be some sort of favouritism for that company. There is reference to the language being used here right the way through the paperwork and I am sure that is the case for the feedback provided to the member for Bateman. This sensitivity for and reference to this company goes right

the way through the commentary in all the FOI documents that we have seen. In any briefing note that has come forward—part of the briefing notes include what sensitivities are set out—procurement keeps being highlighted, and making sure arm's length is kept from whoever wins the project. I am sure a robust process was put in place by the agencies to be able to keep the contractor at full arm's length.

A lot of circumstantial evidence suggests a whole heap of things here do smell and require more than just analysis by an opposition with limited resources. We therefore think that supporting this motion is really important. What will the project deliver after we have been through all that? It will be one megawatt for one year as a trial; that is it. Perhaps intellectual property will come out of it from the University of Western Australia centre that is going to make some sort of analysis that others can access to be able to utilise that information, and a bit of common-use infrastructure. That is another question; in fact, I think I already put it on notice: of the resources that the government is putting in—\$15.75 million of royalties for regions money—how much is going towards what will stay bolted to the ground and allowed to be accessed by other companies that want to use the infrastructure?

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Do you mean how much in value?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The government is giving the company \$15.75 million and a big part of its argument is that common-use infrastructure will be built that others can use; how much of that \$15.7 million will go into the piece that is bolted to the ground? If it is a couple of million dollars, then another \$10 million or \$12 million, is going to the company to do what? Is it R&D? Yes. What is that worth? It is worth the value of whatever someone can utilise that information for to commercialise the project. It is pretty hard to put a value on that.

I have one other point that has not been raised before. What I have talked about so far has been common information, which we have been able to build up over time. When the project was finalised at Garden Island and the state government put resources into it, I assume there is a report somewhere that outlines, "This is what we have concluded. This is what we have done. These are the issues. These are the outcomes." I am not aware of that report.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: If the Leader of the Opposition is aware of the report, I am not. I have put a question on notice to see whether there is a report, because I think a number of other issues will emerge on the south coast that were not issues on the west coast. One of them is the environment. If people go fishing anywhere on the west coast, 25 days out of a month they can probably get offshore and get home before it gets too choppy. If people try to go fishing off the south coast, they can go probably only three or four days out of a month simply because of the challenges of the weather—the environment, the waves and all the issues with how tough that environment is. If there is a report, I think it will give us some indication of whether there were significant issues off the west coast and also perhaps some environmental issues. If something is being bolted to the ground, we want to be sure it will not move anywhere to affect anything. Hydraulic fluid is being used—I think sea water, or other hydraulic fluid within the project—out in the ocean in a sensitive, marine environment. I assume a report outlines some of these issues and whether they emerged from the trial. I would have thought what might have arisen from a trial that occurred here would be fundamental to the integrity of a procurement process for what the government calls a trial on the south coast. Making a report like that public would be a pretty significant step to giving not only the opposition but also the public some understanding that a range of issues has been taken into account by the company that is doing the project on the south coast, well beyond what we are talking about here. Environmental issues and any other issues may well have emerged from the project off the west coast, which was used as part of the selection process.

Last of all, I refer to the selection process. A little bit of reference to the selection process is made in the FOI documentation we have, but what was the criteria and were the reviews and reports on previous government investments with the same company taken into account for the decision for the project on the south coast? We can talk about circumstantial evidence. I am pretty certain from what I see here that there is not enough to sack a minister, but in our view, there is enough to warrant having a much closer look at how the project was managed, how it is being managed, and whether there are significant risks to the taxpayer spend. Exactly what will the project get for the taxpayer? Is there value for money in that? The member for Bateman highlighted a range of issues with the costs and what the project will deliver. I am sure the issues he raised will totally overwhelm the people of Albany, because the project is nothing like what they expected when the Labor Party came into government.

There are a number of issues. The National Party supports the motion put up by the member for Bateman and I think it would be a good step to put this issue to bed by getting someone to have a closer look at it and go through to check the steps that were carried out with all issues that have been raised.

That would give some sort of assurance to the public that it is getting value for money and it is not a whitewash from a couple of ministers, including the Premier in this house and a minister in the other place who has a significant passion for these areas and sometimes might have that passion go a little bit beyond where reality and probity should be.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [4.40 pm]: I rise to make some comments in support of this motion. I remember really clearly when the wave energy policy was announced during the election campaign, because in government we were working on a whole range of renewable energy policies. We had extensive discussions with Carnegie. Carnegie is a major firm that specialised for a long time in wave energy but it then merged with Energy Made Clean, which is a fringe-of-grid battery–solar combination firm. Carnegie is a good Western Australian firm. It has done work on wave energy particularly and it is probably some of the best in the world. As energy minister I had extensive discussions over four years with Carnegie and saw its people many, many times—good people. In all my discussions they never suggested the wave farm in Albany. Back in, I think, 2008 or 2009, Carnegie received a lead grant from the state government for a wave farm experiment in Albany and it went there for a time. But it came back to the government and said that it did not want to invest in Albany because it was not suitable in terms of hydrology, wave pattern and location and it wanted to go to Garden Island. Carnegie wanted to go to Garden Island for a range of reasons, including hydrology and wave pattern. Because of high costs it had decided on a business plan and found a niche, quite brilliantly in my view. That niche was to supply island-based naval bases around the world with a backup energy–water source to the traditional systems, and there was Garden Island. The important thing about wave technology is that it provides not only electricity, but also desalinated water through the pumping system. Garden Island was perfect and there was a customer in the Navy. Carnegie asked the previous energy minister whether he would automatically redirect the lead funding and he said no, it had to put together a business case. It subsequently did and got, I think, \$10 million or \$12 million; I cannot remember that because it was before my time. Eventually Carnegie signed a contract, upgraded its systems quite significantly and had a good relationship going on with the Navy. Carnegie then started marketing that technology around the world in places such as Reunion Island and Diego Garcia. It is a good firm and very innovative. I also had discussions with Carnegie about standalone or edge-of-grid systems, which it had put in quite a few places. I think it won a project in Kalbarri—good on it—for a basic microgrid standalone solar battery system with diesel backup. That is what the company specialises in. In fact, it said it would like to do one in the Albany area. I asked about the wave farm in Albany and was told that Carnegie was not interested. In fact, on the day this project was announced during the election campaign I was having a meeting with Carnegie, talking about its proposals for edge-of-grid systems. News of the project was published in the newspaper and Carnegie did not know anything about it—it did not know a damn thing. It was a bit nervous because its name was mentioned. It then contacted the opposition at that time. This beautiful picture was organised showing the then shadow Minister for Energy, the member for Cannington, the now Premier and, of course, Alannah MacTiernan, who was a citizen at large at that time. I asked where the picture came from and was told, “We don’t know. It was plucked out of the air. We didn’t propose it to them.” That was Carnegie’s involvement. Obviously, Carnegie then had a discussion with the then opposition, which became the government, and on 13 March, two days after the election—it was a Monday, obviously—it put out an announcement, which it had to do by law, to the Australian Securities Exchange, with the heading “\$19.5m grant for Albany Wave Energy Project progresses with the newly elected WA Government”, and the subsequent release described the project. It stated —

“We’re delighted to be working with the newly elected Government of Western Australia to deliver on the potential of wave energy at Albany. Wave energy justifiably demands a sort of investment ...

Blah, blah, blah —

... have benefited from ... the Government’s \$19.5million commitment is a strong step towards this.”

This was two days after the election and there was still no business plan. The government had not formed yet and there was no official energy minister, but Carnegie had to announce it, because it fully expected and was obviously told that it had the gig. It would not make a statement to the ASX without that. It was told and it subsequently got the gig—shocking. Do members know what? The project that Carnegie described in the ASX announcement of 23 February 2017 and that of 13 March 2017 is exactly the same. Before the election Carnegie was told that it got the gig and that it would get the \$19.5 million wave farm. In the first instance Carnegie said that the wave farm would deliver one megawatt and would then go to 20 megawatts, resulting in over \$100 million worth of investment. That is what Carnegie told the stock exchange. Further, the release states —

Successful demonstration of the 20MW farm could in turn lead to a 100MW expansion.

That is what Carnegie announced to the ASX: “This is a great thing. It’s going to grow to \$100 million.” That would all be spawned by the \$19.5 million contribution from the government. Of course, there is not even a market for one megawatt for a year. At the same time the government, of course then in opposition, went to the election with no energy policy whatsoever—none. At the time the shadow Minister for Energy was promising a renewable energy target of 50 per cent. He backed away from that when he had to defend it. Remember there was chaos in South Australia, so it was not really a good thing to defend, so the opposition abandoned that target. It had no renewable policy whatsoever, except for a biomass farm and a solar farm in Collie, and then this thing was cooked up. Now we have a government committed to this one-megawatt project. There is nothing about 20 megawatts or 100 megawatts. The government went through the facade of saying that the project went out to tender. It clearly went to tender, but it was always cooked up for Carnegie. Carnegie was always going to get this project; it was

probably specified. There is no business case yet. The member for Bateman read out something saying that the whole project is supposed to cost \$64 million. Carnegie is a profit-making firm. The last I saw, its share price was 3c; it is not worth very much, but it is a good firm. Why would it invest \$38 million into a project that will generate, at most, one megawatt for a year, with no contract and no commitment? The energy minister made it quite clear that this is not part of his renewable energy package with Bright Energy. He is not committed to buying a single electron from that project; therefore, it is not viable. Why would a profit-making firm commit \$38 million to a one-megawatt wave farm, in a place where it does not think it should be, without any market for Synergy? There is no capacity; it has to get the transmission capacity. Why would Carnegie do that? This is a shocker. There is no business plan by anybody. It got a contract before the tender was let. It does not make sense. It is not what Carnegie originally said it was for. This is in an area that Carnegie did not want to go to.

We read all about the Langoulant report, which stated that project definitions require due diligence, cost-benefit analyses, business plans, complete transparency and assessments of all risk and for it to be put out to the public. We have none of this. This is the worst project definition that I have ever seen. Yes, in certain projects things go wrong. What went wrong here is that a citizen of Western Australia effectively in opposition, the now Premier, committed to pay \$15.7 million to Carnegie. The real issue is what are the real commitments from Carnegie? Is it locked in to contributing \$38 million to this project or is it just going to bill the \$15.7 million given to it by the government? I assume some of that goes to the University of Western Australia. What will it get from this?

As the member for Bateman said, the idea that it is a research station is complete bogus because we have already funded, with other commonwealth and state funding, an experiment off Garden Island. Most of that was to test the technology. Waves are all around the world, but they had to identify the optimal technology for the wave farm. They went through a number of upgrades relating to size. I understand that the one in Albany will have the largest size, but that could have been scheduled to be done off Garden Island. The idea that we needed an experiment was bogus. Also, Australian Renewable Energy Agency commonwealth funding was put into this project. That funding was provided to Carnegie for Garden Island. It is not new funding, but under this project—under the sway of the government—the \$11 million from ARENA was transferred to the Albany project. In other words, it took it away from an experiment that had a contract. The important thing off Garden Island was used to not only identify the optimal technology and the scale of it, but also service a client. The government took it away from Garden Island where it had a paying customer, an isolated island-based military base, that could meet its business plan into the future and transferred it down to Albany. Albany has a couple of characteristics. It is a marginal seat and people obviously have some fringe-of-grid issues there. If the government had said that through a renewable energy program it would invest with Carnegie or somebody else a fringe-of-grid system in the Albany area, that would have made a lot of sense, but it did not do that.

The minister can perhaps explain how a profit-making firm such as Carnegie can invest \$38 million into a project that will not make a cracker, has one megawatt at most and does not even have a contract to sell the energy. How can it invest and justify to the stock exchange the \$38 million investment? Also, could the minister confirm that the contractor Carnegie has gone to the stock exchange and said that this project is not only one megawatt. The project is to be delivered in stages and will involve a one-megawatt wave farm, followed by a 20-megawatt wave farm, resulting in \$100 million worth of local investment. Has the government committed to further investment in the wave farm? Has it had discussions about a take-or-pay contract or some kind of off-take contract to justify this? Has it also agreed or had discussions to expand that 20-megawatt facility to a 100-megawatt facility, which on scale would be in the vicinity of \$500 million? If the government had made such a commitment, maybe that would justify Carnegie's \$38 million investment in the project because it has to get a return on this. It would not invest \$38 million on a one-megawatt feed, so what else has the government promised? What has it said?

As we have pointed out, the government has been completely non-transparent. The Labor Party made a commitment at the election and then it said that Carnegie is the contractor. "We're going to do this, Carnegie." Then the government said that it would put the wave energy project out to tender. The Labor Party made the statement before the election. It won the election and Carnegie was forced to go to the stock exchange and say that it had the contract. Then the government went through this charade of going out to tender. It is all fake. There is no business case. Carnegie—surprise, surprise—won the contract. The first question was: what are we going to do with the energy? Carnegie said that it would put it through the Albany wind farm. It found out that it does not have the capacity and it would have to build another one. It wrote to the Minister for Energy and asked whether the government would buy it. The government said that it would not. This is a complete joke.

Day after day, government members lecture us about the Langoulant file. This is worse than any of the project definitions referred to in that report. This is a complete farce. The government is using royalties for regions money and says that it is broke. It says that the previous government lost all this money and therefore we have to make savings, but the minister over there said that he is also the saviour of royalties for regions. He proudly said that only Labor will save royalties for regions. There are no savings in royalties for regions. This \$15.7 million is coming out of royalties for regions. What else has the government cut from royalties for regions to fund this project? It has cut funding to a range of projects, including the Moora Residential College upgrade. I guarantee

members that the rate of return on the Moora Residential College upgrade would dwarf this floating white elephant off Albany because kids will go to school there and live in the residential college and save the town of Moora, which is shrinking in capacity. All this will do is titillate the sometimes resident of Albany, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, who spends a lot of time down in Albany. It might please the member for Albany. However, I will tell members that this is the worst case of fraudulent electioneering I have ever seen. Labor promised during the election that it would give this contract to Carnegie. It went through a tender arrangement. Whoop—Carnegie got the tender and then it told the stock exchange that it is going to be bigger than *Ben-Hur* and it will invest all this money into it and there is no capacity to do it whatsoever.

Mr W.R. Marmion: What about the petrochemical one?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: That is a good one. We look at the renewable policy of the government and we see that it is the same thing everywhere. I understand that there is no money for the Collie biomass plant. I think that the member said the government is trying to farm that out to local government. We have not heard much about the solar farm in Collie, but it is not part of the Minister for Energy's renewable policy. Hon Alannah MacTiernan is pushing the solar farm in the goldfields. It has been pushed for a long time. That is not in the renewable policy. How will that be funded? The real whopper, of course, is the \$9.5 billion project to export solar power from the Pilbara to Indonesia that she has been suggesting. I do not think that the Treasurer is keen on that one. I would be surprised if he is. Who is the Minister for Energy? Why is the Minister for Regional Development allowed to go tiptoeing through the electorates of Western Australia, taking money and promising these ludicrous renewable energy projects? Then today the bastions of anti-privatisation have basically privatised 80 per cent of a range of Synergy's existing renewable assets. They went on this war, saying, "We will never privatise electricity assets." The real problem they have with this—I would like the minister to explain—is that when I got that same advice, of course, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union was not involved. It was a Dutch firm and we knocked it back for good reason. It was a high-cost approach and its only benefit would be that it would get it over the balance sheet. But I was told by Treasury over and again that accounting changes would bring it back under the balance sheet.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park — Minister for Energy) [5.00 pm] I rise to respond to the very broad range of issues raised in this debate. I want to correct what I said yesterday concerning the Greenough River solar farm, you will be pleased to know, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney). I think I said yesterday in question time that the increase was to 30 megawatts; but it has increased by 30 megawatts, from 10 to 40 megawatts. I do not want to be accused of in anyway misleading the house.

We had this debate a few weeks ago when the member for Warren–Blackwood raised this issue again, I think, in private members' time. It might have been a matter of public interest. We have gone through it, but I am quite happy to go through it all again. There are a few issues I want to deal with because, ultimately, the shadow Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition raised some interesting points. Interestingly, after the Leader of the Opposition said at the time it was announced by the opposition, he was with Carnegie.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Yes.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is confirmation; thank you. Carnegie said to him in response—I wrote it down—that he did not know what this is about and that they never suggested the wave farm in all of their discussions that he had with Carnegie. Yet he was unsure how that could therefore become what the Leader of the Opposition said then "a fraudulent electioneering" in which a deal had somehow been done with Carnegie Energy prior to the election—and then—despite Carnegie knowing nothing about it.

The Leader of the Opposition said that they knew nothing about it, but apparently it was some grand conspiracy entered into with the Australian Labor Party and Carnegie Wave Energy prior to the election that we then delivered on after the election. I am unsure how that can be the case, but, in any case, I will let the Leader of the Opposition continue with his little tinfoil hat on his head to worry about that issue. I want to remind all members here what the election commitment was. I think it is worth putting it on the record. I have 60 minutes and I will probably take most of it. I have our media statement of 23 February 2017. It was on the website prior to the election, and I want to address the issue of great fraud as though it was some grand secret. It is headed —

A McGowan Labor Government will invest \$19.5million to develop Albany as a globally recognised energy hub to create hundreds of WA jobs.

It states —

WA Labor will build common user infrastructure to provide the opportunity for energy companies —

I emphasise this point —

to develop their technology and facilitate the establishment of wave technology and farms.

I am emphasising that for a reason and I will come back to that in a minute. It continues —

This will capitalise on the existing electricity infrastructure and connect wave renewable energy into the interconnected grid. It will stabilise energy supplies to Albany and the Great Southern.

By keeping Western Power in public hands, WA Labor will ensure that transmission lines will always remain as a backup and service standards will remain high.

A McGowan Labor Government will also work with the University of Western Australia (UWA), Carnegie Clean Energy and other stakeholders to develop a Wave Energy Centre of Excellence in Albany.

This will place Western Australia at the leading edge in the development of this new technology.

In 2008, the WA Labor Government negotiated the trial of wave generated electricity to Albany, one of the world's best sites to capitalise on wave energy. The Liberal-National Government took this project away from Albany.

The infrastructure will be paid for by reallocating funds set aside from the Liberal-National Government's failed Albany to Bunbury gas pipeline.

That is the policy. There it is.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: No; just wait. Sorry?

Mr D.T. Redman: This here is the policy.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is it; it was replicated in the "Plan for Albany", the plan for the great southern, and I think it appeared in another document, but that was it—23 February 2017 prior to the election. There was no conspiracy; there was no fraud; there was no secrecy. It was on the WA Labor website. I think the Premier was probably in Albany announcing it. Indeed, a lot of people announced wave energy in Albany, including the National Party. This has been around for a long time. I am intrigued and disappointed that the shadow Treasurer would suggest that somehow my integrity is impugned by the fact that we are delivering on this election commitment. The Minister for Tourism interjected quite accurately about some of the shadow Treasurer's behaviour when he was a minister. I have not yet referred to the Leader of the Opposition's shareholdings. I may or may not do; we will see how the evening goes. Let us just put that out there because I have all the information here if I need to go through it in some detail.

Arguments suggest that because Hon Alannah MacTiernan has a close relationship with Carnegie, the project is compromised. I note by way of evidence the Leader of the Opposition said two things: first, how could Carnegie Energy possibly make any money out of this and, second, that I need to explain this. That is the beauty of the private sector; it makes its own decisions. There is no secret deal, Leader of the Opposition. Relax.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Yes, right, right!

Mr B.S. WYATT: "Yes, right, right", he says. There is no secret deal; there is no grand conspiracy. I assume it is the same reason Australian Renewable Energy Agency is investing, Leader of the Opposition. I note that the Leader of the Opposition said, and I wrote it down, "It is the worst project definition I have ever seen." I saw one involving Muja AB. Let me tell members about bad deals. Let me tell members about bad project definition plans. The then Treasurer, the now Leader of the Opposition, threw away over \$300 million and he talks about bad project definition plans. I will leave that hanging like the bad smell it is in this debate.

I will deal with Hon Alannah MacTiernan again. I think I dealt with this last week or the week before, member for Warren-Blackwood, when we had this debate. I want to put this on the record because it again highlights lack of research by the opposition because the shadow Treasurer said that Hon Alannah MacTiernan sat on the board of Carnegie Wave Energy. At no point has she ever sat on the board of Carnegie—ever. Let us get it clear. If the opposition is going to throw around this sort of muck, be clear with exactly what its allegations are. Hon Alannah MacTiernan sat on the board of a company called Energy Made Clean and, as a result of that, she was given a number of shares, I assume, effectively, as payment for her role on the board. That goes back to 2011. On 17 August 2016, Hon Alannah MacTiernan was nominated to fill the North Metropolitan Region vacancy. On 26 October 2016, Carnegie announced it would acquire Energy Made Clean. On 6 December 2016, Energy Made Clean shares were then converted to Carnegie Clean Energy shares and that is how Hon Alannah MacTiernan ended up with shares in Carnegie. She did not sit on the board. The member for Bateman said that she sat on the board. That was never the case. In January 2017, we announced our commitment to Wave Energy and on 15 March 2017, four days after WA Labor had won the election, Hon Alannah MacTiernan divested all her Carnegie shares by way of a donation to the Leprosy Mission Australia and a day later she was sworn in as Minister for Regional Development. That is the time frame, as I have pointed out many times. The now minister divested herself of any shares prior to becoming a minister. Despite what the member for Bateman said, the honourable minister never sat on the board of Carnegie; she sat on the board of Energy Made Clean.

I want to go through the commitment. I have outlined what our commitment was; it is on the website. There is no grand conspiracy. I want to confirm again that there were two components—the wave energy technology development project and the research centre. The research centre is where we capture the opportunities out of the technology developments. Members on the other side are confused by the role the Minister for Regional

Development has. I accepted the member for Warren–Blackwood’s comments of last week or the week before that this is a subsidy to Carnegie. That is correct; I do not resile from that and I am not disputing that. It is a significant subsidy. It is a capital subsidy to Carnegie. That does not need to be thrown around as if it is a surprise or with suspicion. That is what it is.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Any business case for it?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Funnily enough, I now know—the shadow Treasurer has said that a party has to have to have a business case in opposition before it can commit to an election commitment.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: No, I wrote that down. I look forward to this. It is going to come back at election time. I wrote that down. The shadow Treasurer said that. We were in opposition but we came in determined—this is a surprise for members of the Liberal Party—to deliver on those election commitments. There are two components to it. I will come to the common user and infrastructure question that the member for Warren–Blackwood raised in a minute.

The tender process was thorough. The Expenditure Review Committee and the cabinet considered this at some length. Two requests for proposals were drafted—one for each aspect of the project. As I said, it has two components. The requests for proposals were reviewed by the Department of Finance—my agency—and the State Solicitor’s Office. Two processes were undertaken. The RFP for the technology development project was lodged on Tenders WA for a five-week period. The RFP for the wave energy research centre was issued on a restricted basis on Tenders WA to the four WA universities. It is Tenders WA, so all members opposite can get on there and have a squiz. The request for proposals for the technology development project was issued to Tenders WA on 28 July 2017 and it was open for five weeks as well. They were both open for five weeks. Five proposals were received from a variety of developers—Western Australian, Australian, and international. There was a fair bit of interest in this. I refer by way of aside to the Leader of the Opposition’s question of why the private sector would be interested in this. That is up to the private sector. Either way, there was a range of interest from around WA, Australia and, indeed, internationally.

Ultimately, we are all concerned with process and after the period of the former government we have been concerned with ensuring there is process and that it is robust. The tender was subject to a comprehensive evaluation process and the proposals were evaluated by a panel comprising representatives of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, the Great Southern Development Commission and the Public Utilities Office. It was overseen by the Department of Finance. The office of the Minister for Regional Development played no role in the evaluation of the tenders. I am trying to clarify that the conspiracy does not exist. That interagency evaluation panel concluded that Carnegie was the recommended respondent for the Albany wave energy technology development project. I highlight this because on this side of the chamber I have always considered this as a technology development project and not so much an energy generation project. Let that sink in. I said to the member for Warren–Blackwood that if it were an energy generation project it would be very expensive energy being generated. That is why there is no power purchase agreement. The Leader of the Opposition said that because there is no PPA the project has no value. Just the other day I went up to Northam for the groundbreaking of the Northam solar farm. I am sure that some people on the other side of the chamber would support the Northam solar farm. Again, it has no PPA with the state government and is financed by Carnegie. It has no PPA so Carnegie is taking that risk—as the private sector should. The Leader of the Opposition said that those projects have no value. I can only assume that is because he is a socialist and he likes to have the state involved. I say that somewhat cheekily, I must admit.

Mr W.J. Johnston: He spent \$300 million on a power station!

Mr B.S. WYATT: I know. I will refer to the project paying \$300 million for Muja A and B, which I think will haunt him for a long time.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr B.S. WYATT: I will continue with the process. The final decision to award funding to Carnegie was made following the tender process, which was open to the international market. It was evaluated by an independent panel. I am not sure what else could have been done to ensure that the process had some rigor. There was no conspiracy. As I said to the member for Warren–Blackwood last week, I suspect my office wanted Carnegie removed because, from our end, that decision had not been made at that point in those—I assume they are emails that the member was looking at. That was never my view. Clearly, Carnegie had an ambitious plan to become the successful proponent for it. Why did it tell the stock exchange the things it did? The member would have to ask it. But I have a sneaking suspicion that there might be just a general hostility toward Carnegie in the Liberal Party and that concerns me. Carnegie is a good Western Australian company that has done a lot of interesting, innovative and exciting things. The Liberal Party should ease up on its critique of Carnegie. It is exactly what we in this place

should all want to see—a successful Western Australian company. It is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition is so angry at Carnegie.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Why did the Leader of the Opposition not quote that in his speech? He had his time, but because he wanders aimlessly in his speeches through a variety of weird topics he does not get the chance to make his case in a coherent manner. As a result, he finds himself frustrated sitting there as I critique his performance.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you have had the opportunity to contribute. I do not think the minister is taking your interjection.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I get the Leader of the Opposition's frustration. If he could just get a bit clearheaded, he might make his case okay and then we will be able to debate. What goes from his brain to his mouth sometimes distorts along the way.

There was some conversation around CETO 3, CETO 5 and CETO 6, which is what Albany is. One of the strongest critiques, I guess, has been about the amount of energy being produced—a maximum of 1.5 megawatts at Albany. In the Garden Island project CETO 3 and CETO 5 had a maximum capacity of 720 kilowatts. The amount of money that went into those projects—CETO 3 and CETO 5—was \$50.1 million, whereas Albany is \$53 million. The scale is double. I accept that 1.5 megawatts is not huge in what we consume in the state but it is double what Garden Island was. Interestingly, the state funding for Garden Island all up was about \$19 million. The state component for Albany is \$15.35 million. Funding from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency for CETO 5 on Garden Island was \$13 million. It looks as though it will be around \$11 million for Albany, with \$25 million of private sector money. I do not understand why the Liberal Party is so aggravated by the private sector investing in this. It is exactly what we try to do when we have these sorts of capital subsidies. As I said to the member for Warren–Blackwood, I am perfectly relaxed to call it a capital subsidy because that is exactly what it is.

As I pointed out a minute ago, the difference is that the capacity of CETO 5 was small scale—240 kilowatts, whereas the wave farm is large-scale in comparison at 1.5 megawatts. Garden Island is onshore and Albany is offshore with a subsea cable. The waves off Albany are called, interestingly, highly energetic waves, versus the calmer waters off Garden Island. The member for Bateman made some points that we know this technology, but the reality is that we do not. That is why we continue to invest in this space and others around the world continue to invest. To date, there are no commercial wave farms in the world. We still have not solved this technological issue. This is what state governments do. I get it that there will be political differences between the parties about how we invest what is effectively R&D money in different projects; we used to critique the former government on how it spent money. But it is simply incorrect to suggest that there is some sort of conspiracy.

The common-use infrastructure will enable future wave energy developers to test their device once Carnegie has completed its testing, and it will be the first wave energy test bed in the southern hemisphere. Hopefully, that will assuage some of the member for Warren–Blackwood's concerns about the common-use infrastructure. Also, the common-use infrastructure vested to the state at the end of the technology project will be worth about \$20 million, which is more than the entire state's contribution to the project. That is what state governments are seeking to achieve with those sorts of subsidies. The state government puts in a contribution—in this case the Australian Renewable Energy Agency; effectively the commonwealth government—and the private sector puts in the vast or singular largest component. As result, the common-use infrastructure that comes back to the state will be worth more than the initial investment. I think that is pretty good. At the end of this will commercial wave energy be provided? I do not know.

Mr W.J. Johnston: R&D.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is why it is R&D—correct, minister—and that is why we are keen to work on this project.

It is the relationship with the UWA research centre that everyone should be highly supportive of. The work that is being done will feed in to masters and PhD students at UWA. They are doing work in a space that, frankly, is perhaps one of the most dynamic and rapidly evolving areas of technology on the globe; that is, renewable energy. This project is just one part of that. As a result of this investment, UWA has come on board to capture local opportunities. The Leader of the Opposition can snidely say, "The member for Albany likes it and the sometimes resident of Albany, the Minister for Regional Development, likes it." Yes, we all like it, but there is no grand conspiracy.

I am making sure that I have dealt with all members' questions. This debate is a little like groundhog day because I did this only the other week.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the government has been completely "non-transparent". All the Liberal Party needs to do is to ask me a question and I will answer it. The last time a Liberal Party member asked me a question on any topic—Treasury, Energy, Aboriginal Affairs or Finance—in question time was in November

last year. The National Party has asked me a few questions, but the last question I received from the Liberal Party in question time was in November last year. I make this point: they should not accuse me of being non-transparent if they are not going to ask me questions about the projects that the government is involved in. As I said, the member for Warren–Blackwood is the one person who has asked questions on this topic. He has raised a matter of public interest and a private members’ motion on it. I suggest that the member for Warren–Blackwood has pursued this issue with some vigour probably because it is in his patch and he has a keen interest in the matter. I understand that.

I make one final point before I conclude. I do not think the member for Warren–Blackwood raised this question today, but he asked it last time this matter was debated—I think the Leader of the Opposition raised it today—and that is the matter of connection to the grid. He is right. There have been complications. I think they have been resolved, but, ultimately, they are a cost. I think the CEO of Carnegie might have even said on the ABC in Albany that of course any generator has to meet the cost of connection. That is no surprise. It is up to Carnegie to meet those costs, and no doubt it will. But I think that that matter may have been resolved with Western Power. I will have to confirm that.

By way of broad conclusion, I get the sense of aggravation the opposition has to either Carnegie or Hon Alannah MacTiernan—I am not sure which one; perhaps both. I have outlined the shareholdings and board positions that Hon Alannah MacTiernan had. As I said, it was not with Carnegie; it was with Energy Made Clean, which Carnegie then purchased. The honourable minister divested the Carnegie shares that she acquired through that acquisition prior to becoming a minister. What we are delivering is almost identical to our election commitment—it is almost identical to what went up on the website on 23 February 2017, and even before that. We said that we were going to do this and, guess what, we are doing it.

Of course we went through a tender process after coming into government. I think I might have said this the other week to the member for Warren–Blackwood: clearly, Carnegie was likely to be a prominent player or a prominent applicant in that tender process. I do not think anyone was particularly surprised about that because of the work it was doing on Garden Island. It pitched and it won the tender. There were five proponents—international, national and Western Australian. The process that I have outlined, that the Minister for Regional Development was not involved in the evaluation of that tender process, has arrived at where we are with Carnegie.

The other frustration of members is that they think that this is too big an investment and that we are spending too much money on this project. They can hold that position. It is a lot of money, but it is a project that will hopefully generate useful R&D outcomes. It is in a sense a technology development project more than an energy generation project. Usually we would not be spending this sort of money to produce 1.5 megawatts of energy. What it is all about is that there are no commercial wave farms around the world, and that is what we are trying to achieve. But how can we, and can we, supply this source of renewable power commercially? At the moment we do not know how to do that. Hopefully, we will. I do not agree with the Leader of the Opposition’s proposition that if a company does not have a power purchase agreement with a state, its investments in whatever it is doing are not useful or valid. If that were the case, the Northam solar farm would not have had that ground breaking the other week. That is what I would like to see more of—merchant-style generation assets that do not necessarily rely on support by way of a state guarantee—effectively a PPA.

I think I have dealt with all the issues members raised. I have been as honest as I can be. I have provided the information. I have dealt with the minister’s shareholdings. I hope that that assuages members’ concerns. I get that they do not like Carnegie; I get that they do not like the minister. This will work its way out, but their minds may need to make a shift from an energy generation asset to a technology development asset. If they did that, they might not have their knickers in so much of a knot around the election commitment that we are delivering.

With that, I thank the house for the opportunity to again put on the record the reasons WA Labor made this commitment prior to the election, our relationship with Carnegie, the Minister for Regional Development’s relationship with Carnegie and how it may proceed.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [5.27 pm]: I want to make a couple of remarks. Firstly, I want to comment on the extraordinary behaviour of the opposition. Yesterday in the ordinary time of the Parliament, the opposition moved to suspend standing orders. Yesterday, the most important thing in the state to debate was the Minister for Tourism and the tourism portfolio, but today it is the third most important issue. That matter was not the subject of the matter of public interest today; it was not the subject matter of any questions today; and it is not even the main issue raised by the opposition in private members’ time. In private members’ time they went back to the issue that has twice been dealt with by this chamber when the National Party raised it. The Liberal Party told us a couple of weeks ago that it needed to suspend standing orders because it was the National Party’s turn for the MPI. That is why the opposition argued that the Parliament give them a second MPI for that week. Yesterday, it wanted to waste the Parliament’s time dealing with questions around the Minister for Tourism, yet it is not even an issue —

Dr M.D. Nahan: You are just wasting the Parliament’s time.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Acting Speaker, I am not seeking interjections.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Today, they not only do not ask a single question of the minister at any time on any question in question time, but also do not deal with it in the matter of public interest and it is not the first issue they raise in private members' time. If this opposition is ever to be taken seriously in Western Australia, it is going to have to come up with a strategy. The problem is that no-one in Western Australia takes the opposition seriously. Nobody in the media takes them seriously. Nobody in business takes them seriously. Nobody in politics takes them seriously. The federal opposition does not take them seriously and, just as importantly, the federal government does not take them seriously because they are not a serious opposition. We see that every day we come into the chamber because we have to put up with the silliness of an opposition that cannot ask questions to the relevant minister. Its members ask questions of the minister outside his portfolio area, which is a breach of the standing orders, and then they do not prosecute the matter that yesterday they said was so important that we had to disturb the entire functioning of Parliament to allow them to deal with it; today it is the third issue on the agenda. The opposition is a shambles. Everybody in Western Australia knows that the Liberal Party is a shambles. We know that they know they are a shambles because they recycle the National Party's agenda. We know that there is division between the Liberal Party —

Point of Order

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Standing order 94 goes to the issue of relevancy when it comes to this motion. The minister is not addressing that at all.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): We are addressing a motion about whether or not we establish a special inquiry to investigate the Albany wave farm. The minister will keep to that.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is exactly right. We are discussing whether the house should support this motion. I am making the point that the house should not take this seriously because we do not have a serious opposition. It is recycling the National Party's agenda. The Liberal Party has abandoned royalties for regions, and we know that the National Party holds that dear. Now only one governing party in this state supports royalties for regions and that is the Labor Party. The Liberal Party has abandoned sensible behaviour in this chamber. During the last sitting week, its members complained about the Labor Party moving a gag motion for the first time in over a year. Do members know how many gags were moved by the Liberal government in 2016? It moved 13 gags and four of those were moved in one day, as the member for Thornlie well knows. Now its members complain about the behaviour of this government. In this resolution they try to talk about close personal relationships with the Minister for Regional Development. This is coming from a government in which the member for Bateman had to stand aside from his duties in the finance portfolio because he still owned shares in a company that was tendering for work in his portfolio. Back then, the now Leader of the Opposition gave a grant to Telstra without —

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Leader of the Opposition stood —

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Please continue.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member for Riverton —

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, I think you have had your contribution on this aspect. The minister has indicated that he is not taking any interjections.

Point of Order

Mr D.C. NALDER: The minister has made allegations directly against me that are false. I would like him to withdraw them or state the fact.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): Member, I do not believe the minister has made those allegations in that way, but I will ask the minister to focus on the motion.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Exactly, we are discussing whether this house should establish a special inquiry.

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Sorry, Mr Acting Speaker. Did you just say you would ask the minister to withdraw? That is what I thought I heard you say.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): No, that is not what I said.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: In considering whether we should accept the Liberal Party's shambles in the way it conducts its business, and support the shambles of the resolution that it has recycled from the National Party, I want to make the point that the member for Riverton owned shares in Telstra when he gave it a grant without a tender. No minister on this side of the chamber in either house has done that. Member for Bateman, I will take an interjection. Why did the member hand over the control of State Fleet to the member for Riverton?

Mr D.C. Nalder: Sorry. Why did I —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: When you stood aside from your duties —

Mr D.C. Nalder: The State Fleet —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The purchasing arrangement —

Mr D.C. Nalder: No, Fleet Network is a company that I owned a percentage in.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Okay, so why did you stand aside? Why did you hand those functions to the member for Riverton?

Mr D.C. Nalder: At the request of the Premier.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, but you did it without the Premier knowing.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Fleet Network was to do with novated leasing of private individuals. It had nothing to do with State Fleet.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: You were the Minister for Finance at the time; isn't that right?

Mr D.C. Nalder: Yes.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: And you handed over responsibility.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Fleet Network wasn't negotiating any contracts with the government.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: So why did you hand it over to the member for Riverton?

Mr D.C. Nalder: Because—do you understand the ministerial code of conduct?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, but I am asking you —

Mr D.C. Nalder: What happens in the ministerial code of conduct?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If you do not want to tell me why you had to hand it over —

Mr D.C. Nalder: At the request of the Premier.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Why did he request it?

Mr D.C. Nalder: Ask the former Premier.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Okay, fine. I do remember. Do you want me to send you the *Hansard* so that you can remind yourself of it? I make the point that there is nobody on our side of the chamber that has ever had to hand over any responsibilities as was done —

Mr D.C. Nalder: Do you understand the ministerial code of conduct?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Of course I do.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I want to get on to another issue that is —

Dr M.D. Nahan: Have you paid back your double dipping?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I have never double dipped on any matter.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Yes, you have.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, I have not. It is just not true.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: There was portfolio shuffling within three or four days with you guys as you were being sworn in.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Why was that?

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Excellent. I want to get on to this question that is constantly raised about this idea that the Langoulant report says that the Labor government approved the Inalco joint venture in respect of the Muja power station. I will quote from page 24 of the Langoulant report —

Following the initial retirement of Muja Power Station Stages A and B (Muja Power Station) in 2007, Verve Energy considered several options regarding the future use of the power station such as leasing, demolition and refurbishment. In May 2008, Verve Energy concluded an expression of interest process and selected Inalco Energy as the preferred proponent.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Exactly. That is right.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, so when was that?

Dr M.D. Nahan: In May, 2008.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Okay, but that is not the question.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Yes it is.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, because —

Dr M.D. Nahan: You agreed that you were going to renew it and you agreed you —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is just not true.

Dr M.D. Nahan: — were going to enter into it with Inalco and you told the firm to go on and start negotiating. That is what you did.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The problem with that is that the Leader of the Opposition does not understand exactly what is said in this report. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, and has been said in the KPMG report and every other report on this issue, the former government did not approve the project proceeding. It was in 2009 that the project was approved.

Dr M.D. Nahan: The member for Cockburn said, “We chose the joint venture partner. We chose the arrangement. We go out and negotiate and then, in October 2008, the Verve —

Point of Order

Mr B.S. WYATT: Just broadly, I did not utter a word during the Leader of the Opposition’s contribution—not a word. I was interested in it. He was out of order when he interjected on me. I was happy enough with that. He is continuing to do so now.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): What is the point of order?

Mr B.S. WYATT: As you know, interjections are out of order. That is the point of order, and I am sure you will agree.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Treasurer, there no point of order. Minister, earlier you said that you did not want to take interjections, then you said you did. It is difficult for me to give you the protection of the Chair. Do you seek to take interjections?

Mr W.J. Johnston: No.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! I will ask members to make their contributions. Minister, please continue.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Let us understand that in 2009 the then Premier and Hon Peter Collier went to the public and announced that they had approved Verve entering into an arrangement with Inalco. That was the start of approvals. There were no approvals for the project at that time. Anybody who says there were is wrong. I notice a journalist in the gallery. Go back and read *The West Australian*. One of the criticisms made in 2010 or 2011 by the Labor opposition was that the environmental approvals had lapsed on the Muja power station because no action had been taken. This project was badly handled at every stage. Members can look at the minutes of the Public Accounts Committee from the previous Parliament in which they can see the cover-up by its Liberal majority that prevented an inquiry into that arrangement. There have been answers in Parliament—I cannot remember whether 11 or 13 proponents came forward from the expression of interest. Most of those proponents wanted to bulldoze the plant. The idea that the only proposal that was being looked at by the former government was the Inalco idea is not true.

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: I seek your clarification with regard to the standing orders. Is the minister allowed to talk about the deliberations of a parliamentary committee, which should be kept to the deliberations of that committee?

Mr W.J. Johnston: I referred to the minutes.

Mr D.C. Nalder: You said it was a cover-up.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It was.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): Please keep to the matter of the motion.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I will accept the point of order and ask you to keep to the motion.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am talking about whether we should support that this house establishes a special inquiry. In the point I made, for the benefit of the member for Churchlands, I did not refer to the deliberations of the committee; I referred to the minutes that had been tabled in Parliament. If anybody wants to see them, they are in a tabled paper and they can see that votes were held in the committee that were defeated, three votes to two. That is in the minutes of the committee that were tabled in Parliament. It is not a secret. I have not referred to the deliberations or to any other matters that happened inside the committee. I have referred only to the minutes that are publicly available. I said that it is a cover-up because the committee could have done the inquiry at the time but the Liberal majority on the committee prevented it happening. That is a cover-up.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: It's a parliamentary committee, not a government committee.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes. But it was the government majority on the committee that stopped it doing its work.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: You're now making assumptions, which is unfair to the whole role of parliamentary committees.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member! Please continue, minister.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: When the Liberals get caught, this is what we get. We get disrespect, not proper activity. We do not get respect for the Minister for Regional Development, a great Western Australian who is respected by everybody outside this chamber. All the people on our side of the chamber respect her because they know she is a woman of integrity. That contrasts with the members opposite.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I just want to finish this discussion about the Muja project. The formal Liberal government criticised the Labor Party for not reopening the Muja power station. It said that the fact that the Labor government had closed the power station was a mistake.

Dr M.D. Nahan: You did reopen it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is just bizarre. The problem is that members opposite do not read anything. They do not read documents or analyse anything. That is why they end up with these stupid resolutions that waste their own time in this Parliament. This is the third time this matter has been raised.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: It's going to be raised more.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I hope so. I hope it gets raised by the opposition every private members' time because at the end of our parliamentary term, its members will have been irrelevant for their entire period in opposition.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: This is just ridiculous. Let us also ask another question. What would happen if the government had not taken the action to support wave energy research in Albany? The research would have gone to Scotland, because Scotland has a wave energy research park. It invites companies from around the world to go to Scotland and do their research there. Carnegie technology and other technologies in Australia would end up over there. The PhDs and master's degrees would be done over there. The research outcomes and the intellectual property would have all been created in Scotland. Instead, we have put them here. Why is Albany such a good place to have wave energy research centre? It has waves, the strongest waves in our country. The southern coast of Australia is the best place in Australia to put a wave energy park. What a shock.

I make the point, to emphasise the point the Minister for Energy made, that of course Carnegie was likely to be involved in the project, because it has the most advanced technology.

Several members interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: This is a game; this is another rewriting of history.

Dr M.D. Nahan: You announced it in February.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: There was no announcement that Carnegie was going to be the selected tenderer.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Yes, there was.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Leader of the Opposition gets confused with the announcement about the energy research centre.

Dr M.D. Nahan: No, a commercial wave farm in Albany; Carnegie was to build it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I just do not understand why the Leader of the Opposition cannot read what happened here. There were two separate announcements. One was in Albany for the decision to support the infrastructure et cetera for the wave energy park, and the second was done here at Swan Brewery for the research centre. They were two separate announcements. Yes, Carnegie had one of its CETO things at the announcement that included UWA for the proposed research centre, but it was not said to be the proponent. It was probably mentioned as an ideal opportunity to bid for the wave energy park, because it is a Western Australian technology leader. I do not understand why the opposition hates technology. Why does it hate the creation of intellectual property? Why does it hate the idea of doing research? Why does it hate universities producing master's students and PhDs? It is ridiculous that it hates learning so much.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It hates learning, which is probably why it increased TAFE fees 500 per cent when it was in government. It is probably why it is opposing topping up our TAFE system in Western Australia through the efforts of the Minister for Finance because of the withdrawal of funding from the commonwealth government. The Labor Party likes research, intellectual property and PhD students and we think it is wonderful that those things are done here in Western Australia. Guess what? We went to the election and promised to do it, and in government we have done it. As the Minister for Finance; Energy outlined, every single decision is subject to a transparent process, unlike the award of the extension of the black spot program in regional Western Australia to Telstra, which was done with no tender at all. That is exactly what happened.

Mr I.C. Blayney: How can you tender when you've got a virtual monopoly operator around it?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Why did the previous government tender the first time? Why was the first thing tendered and not the second round?

Mr I.C. Blayney: That was to see whether someone was prepared to duplicate and make it.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, talk to the Chair. You have indicated you want the protection of the Chair; do not take interjections.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am just making the point that there was a tender for the first round of the black spot program and there was no tender for the second round.

Several members interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am talking about the Telstra black spot program.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Dr M.D. Nahan: There was an announcement on 23 February 2017 that Carnegie got the project, and it was a commercial wave farm, not an experiment.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I did not announce that.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Of course you didn't, you were a failed energy spokesman.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Whose announcement is that?

Dr M.D. Nahan: Dan Mercer, reporting on your statement.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: There we go; Dan Mercer makes the Labor Party's proposals.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Are you saying he was wrong?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am saying that we did not say that Carnegie would win a contract. No.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Yes, you did.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No; it is just not true.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Minister, please continue.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: You cannot have an argument with a person who does not listen, you cannot have an argument with a person who does not read, and you cannot have an argument with a person who does not analyse. That is the problem with the member for Riverton. He has not learnt anything and has not forgotten anything. That is the problem.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is why we know the member for Riverton will not be the Leader of the Opposition on election day, because none of his colleagues trust him.

Dr M.D. Nahan: You know that?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Is he going to be the leader, member for Bateman?

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Member for Bateman, is the member for Riverton going to be the leader?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): Minister, you asked for an extension and you got it. You asked not to take interjections, so please do not direct questions to the opposition. Talk through the Chair, please.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Excellent; thank you. One asks, when are members opposite going to pledge their loyalty? When are they going to go out and tell everybody that they are going to be loyal to the member for Riverton?

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: How's your loyalty to your leader going? How was that coup attempt in 2016?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: What attempt? Go and read the newspapers. What attempt?

Several members interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is just not true.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Minister, please continue.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mark McGowan had the unanimous support of shadow cabinet and the unanimous support of the caucus, and he continues to do so. I find it extraordinary that the member for Bateman was on the phone to journalists within an hour of the member for Riverton's announcement, as Leader of the Opposition, that he was appalled by the decision.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Are you serious?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, the motion that you are speaking to —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Is about whether we should support this inquiry and, as I keep saying, this is a shambles of an opposition. It is the third occasion they have brought the same resolution to the house. On the previous occasions, they were brought by the National Party and the National Party is now apparently providing the lead for the opposition. I think it is a demonstration that the opposition cannot get its act together that the Albany wave farm special inquiry takes preference over the management of the tourism portfolio, although yesterday the opposition wanted to suspend standing orders. Not a single question was asked of the Minister for Tourism today. The opposition complains about doing research, complains about providing intellectual property, complains about PhD students, complains about master's students. It is bizarre.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr T.J. Healy) casting his vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (14)

Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Dr M.D. Nahan	Mr P.J. Rundle
Dr D.J. Honey	Mr R.S. Love	Mr D.C. Nalder	Ms L. Mettam (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr K. O'Donnell	
Mr A. Krsticevic	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr D.T. Redman	

Noes (33)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr D.T. Punch	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr M. McGowan	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr P.C. Tinley
Ms J. Farrer	Ms S.F. McGurk	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Ms C.M. Rowe	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr D.R. Michael (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr T.J. Healy	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Ms A. Sanderson	
Mr M. Hughes	Mr P. Papalia	Ms J.J. Shaw	
Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr S.J. Price	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski	

Pairs

Ms M.J. Davies	Mrs R.M.J. Clarke
Mrs L.M. Harvey	Mr J.N. Carey

Question thus negatived.

TOURISM PORTFOLIO — MANAGEMENT*Motion*

MS L. METTAM (Vasse) [5.57 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the Minister for Tourism for his gross mismanagement of the tourism portfolio, including intentionally misleading the people of Western Australia on falling international visitor numbers, blaming bureaucrats for his poor decision-making and his range of policies that are causing long-term damage to this important sector.

I will begin by speaking this evening on the back of news today that Etihad Airways has made a decision to withdraw its daily flights to Perth. This is a significant setback for Western Australian tourism. When asked about Etihad's decision, what was the minister's response on ABC radio this morning? He said that he was a little disappointed. The minister should be extremely disappointed, particularly given that he has only just launched a new plan to boost tourism in Western Australia. It identifies that attracting direct flights from overseas to Perth is a key plank in the strategy. The government's two-year action plan includes the following: it will promote Perth as the primary entry point to Australia from the United Kingdom and Europe, and the east coast of the United States, especially leveraging off the Qantas London–Perth direct flights and additional aviation capacity via Middle Eastern airlines. The government will undertake conversion campaigns across key markets as another key part of the strategy, including outback adventures for Germany and Switzerland, and luxury travel from America. The loss of these direct flights serviced by the new 299-seat Boeing Dreamliner offsets the gains made by the former Liberal–National government to have the Qantas London–Perth direct flights using the Dreamliner. It is important to point out that that investment at Perth Airport was a policy criticised by the then Labor opposition, not only for the route, but for the deal itself and the investment in Perth Airport. That is one of the many investments that the former Liberal–National government made in tourism that were criticised.

Just going back to the topic of the Etihad deal, the news we heard today represents an annual loss of about 110 000 seats on direct flights into Perth. The minister said that he was only a little disappointed. As I stated, the minister should be extremely disappointed, particularly about what this means for not only the loss of those visitors coming to Perth, our capital city, but also connecting flights. Abu Dhabi is a transit point to Perth that brings tourists from all over Europe into our great capital city, and the loss of these flights will have a significant impact on WA and WA tourism. Abu Dhabi is a transit point for some of our major tourism markets, including the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy —

[Quorum formed.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, a quorum is present, but I remind you that this is not a case of coming in and then wandering back out again. We need a quorum, so please would you be part of the house of Assembly.

Ms L. METTAM: As I was saying, Abu Dhabi is a transit point to Perth that brings tourists.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I would really like to hear what the member for Vasse is saying, but I cannot with all the noise over here.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, it is lovely that you have deemed to stay with this; now can we keep the noise down a bit.

Debate Resumed

Ms L. METTAM: Abu Dhabi is a transit point that brings tourists to Perth from all over the world. It also attracts people from some of our major tourism markets, including the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Scandinavia and Switzerland. The loss of these direct flights to Perth, with the annual loss of 110 000 seats, is yet another failure of this minister and this government. It raises questions about the management of this important portfolio. Many members would be aware that the opposition made an attempt this week to suspend standing orders in relation to the theme we are talking about tonight—figures for international tourists and the information I received when I asked a question in this place about tourism numbers. On 14 March, I asked a specific question of the Minister for Tourism. That was on the back of some of the worst international tourism figures we have seen in this state—figures that are bad when we consider that there has been growth in every other state. In Western Australia, there has been a decline of five per cent in international visitors, while there has been growth in tourist spending in every other state.

Mr P. Papalia: You are talking about spending.

Ms L. METTAM: I am talking about spending; I said that.

If we compare that with other states—in South Australia, there was growth of 18 per cent, even though it has a less sophisticated aviation market. In Tasmania, which does not have direct international flights, there was growth of 31 per cent. On the back of growth in every other state in the value of tourism dollars supporting small business,

this is more bad news from this government. When I asked the question to the minister in this house about those shocking statistics, when confronted, the minister said, as part of his answer in relation to a campaign that the government had invested in, that the numbers had increased by 52 417. I quote the minister —

In the months between September and December last year, as a consequence of a campaign that was requested by the industry—we met at our first industry consortia that the Premier hosted in March last year ...

Further he said —

... the numbers increased by 52 417.

However, the figures released by Tourism Research Australia highlighted that international visitor numbers fell from 965 900 to 946 100, that actually being a reduction of 19 800 visitors for the last six months of 2017. It is not surprising that the opposition sought to look into these figures further, because significant and consistent declines occurred in tourism spend numbers over those last 12 months. We also saw a 12 per cent decline in interstate spending. In trying to find out more information about why the minister had come to this conclusion, the opposition put forward some questions through to the Legislative Council. What happened there was quite bizarre in fact. The minister not only lodged an answer, but he also lodged the draft ministerial statement. The department provided draft comments for the minister, and there is quite a difference between what the department drafted and what the minister said when he made a brief ministerial statement in this house. The draft ministerial statement states —

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to share with the house that the campaigns created with that \$2 million have resulted in 52,147 bookings during the campaign period.

When the minister read this out on the floor of the house, he said that it resulted in 52 147 bookings during the campaign period and quoted that it was money spent by these additional visitors. The minister has embellished the information provided by the department, because we do not know whether they are additional visitors. They booked, but we do not know whether they were coming anyway. They are only bookings at this stage. Then when asked about it in the Legislative Assembly, following the brief ministerial statement, the embellishment goes even further. When asked about the number of international visitors, the minister stated that they increased by 52 417 for that period. That is clearly a case of misleading the house. As I said, the minister in his brief ministerial statement said —

The money spent by these additional visitors represents a significant contribution towards our goal of economic improvement and job creation.

By way of his statement, the minister has suggested something that his department was not willing to draft; that is, these visitors not only are additional, but also have come and grown the economy. Who is to say that they would not have booked anyway? We need an explanation of how people who have booked but may not yet have visited and spent in this state would have significantly contributed to the goal of economic improvement and job creation in the economy. It is clear that the minister has misled the house in this way. In answer to the question on the fall in international tourists spending in this state, the minister also had the gall to lay the blame on the former Liberal–National government. The minister stated —

Member, if there is a failure in strategy for international tourism, it is entirely the responsibility of the campaigns that were conducted prior to that 12 months.

This is a frustration in not only the opposition, but also the community. This government has now been in power for more than 12 months and it is now time for it to take responsibility for its policy failures. At the top of the list of concerns with the way in which the tourism portfolio has been managed would have to be the machinery-of-government changes under this government's watch. Before I go to those issues surrounding the machinery-of-government changes, I point to comments made by the then Labor opposition on 28 February 2017, which is available on the markmcgowan.com.au website. It states —

“A McGowan Labor Government will be focused on ensuring tourism is prioritised in everything we do.

One of the first decisions that the McGowan government made in the tourism portfolio was to relegate this department into a major megadepartment and make the role of the CEO in leading the department of tourism a part-time position. The ministry position was certainly relegated as well. We went from the Premier of this state, the most senior role, having the portfolio of tourism, to it going to one of the most junior ministers.

Dr A.D. Buti: I don't think he's that junior.

Ms L. METTAM: He is one of the many ministers who directs that department. He is competing for a voice against the Minister for Agriculture and Food, the Premier, the Minister for Commerce, and the Minister for Science. He is a junior minister in that department. It was evidenced this week when he was asked questions regarding the director general of the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation. By the mere fact that the Minister for Tourism was unable to answer questions regarding the role of director general, it was clear that he has no control over this

megadepartment. I am not raising that concern in isolation. That concern has been repeated time and again by the tourism industry. The consistent message from the industry is that every other state that has tried to make its tourism department part of a megadepartment has reversed the decision afterwards. Victoria, which enjoys about 25 per cent of market share, has invested in Visit Victoria. That is almost at arm's length from government. Visit Victoria has a corporate structure and is much closer to industry. We have a department of tourism, Tourism WA, which is as far away from industry as we can get because it is bundled in with bureaucracy. The director general of the department also has responsibilities for other departments. The minister responsible is only one of several who have direction over this megadepartment.

The role of Tourism WA in promoting our state to visitors is like no other. It is a very unique role. I appreciate that there have been some comments, since the sacking of Stephen Wood, that someone will be appointed in a leadership position under the director general within the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation. There is an outstanding need for this department to be at arm's length and to have its own agency and be much closer to industry. I am aware that when in opposition, the now Minister for Tourism raised much concern over the lead marketing role in the former department of tourism. Under this government's watch, that position is yet to be filled. The WA Labor opposition raised such concerns about the marketing and partnerships position, but it is an outstanding need. When growing tourism in this state, it is essential that we look at who is leading tourism in the department with the specialisation and know-how in procuring events and negotiating with airlines. Who will be the individuals involved in the background ensuring that Etihad Airways comes back to WA? Who will be the person involved and directing the agency in grassroots events? It is essential a dedicated and full-time leader is in charge of the agency, giving the agency the direction it deserves. It is essential that the role of marketing and partnerships is a permanent full-time role at the very least. It is a fact that under the former government, the position was to be filled and it is a fact that the WA Labor opposition raised this as a significant concern. Unfortunately, the matter was caught up in the pay freezes at the time, but it is no excuse not to recognise the value of both positions. When it comes to leading tourism in this state and leading the marketing of this state, it is fair to say that we have gone significantly backwards not just in our tourism and visitor spending, which is very clear, with the five per cent drop in international spending against growth across the country. This government is sending a message to the industry about the tourism portfolio by relegating it into a megadepartment, making the tourism role of the chief executive officer a part-time position with other big responsibilities in State Development and by not filling that part-time position.

The government made exactly the wrong response to the worst set of figures the tourism industry has seen; namely, the sacking of Stephen Wood. Stephen Wood, CEO of the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation was a man who was very well respected by industry. He had vast experience in mining and was instrumental in getting the Gorgon gas and Wheatstone projects off the ground. He is a man with a distinguished career in state development and with an impossible task. He had to lead not only an agency in state development, he also an agency promoting tourism in this state—two very different areas of expertise. It is understood that no-one knows more about China than Stephen Wood does. It is understood that he was very well connected within the department. He had an impossible task and he was made the fall guy, the scapegoat; he was a distraction from the real issue of these tourism numbers and the direction the department and tourism were going in this state. As I said, it was an impossible task for Stephen Wood to fulfil. We have lost someone competent in this state development portfolio but I believe that this ruthless decision and distraction from the real issues gives this government an opportunity to get things right; that is, do an effective backflip and once again create a dedicated tourism portfolio and a dedicated agency with a full-time tourism CEO.

I have already talked about the machinery of government changes, which have hurt the tourism industry and left many in the sector confused about who was directing and leading the agency. It is absolutely a fair call that if we speak to industry groups we hear a consistent message across industry regarding that.

Mr P. Papalia: From whom?

Ms L. METTAM: At the strategy launch I heard a consistent message.

Mr P. Papalia: From whom?

Ms L. METTAM: I do not have to name names. I do not know that they would be comfortable with me repeating it in *Hansard*. It has been well documented and well versed in the public. There has been consistent concern about the way the portfolio has been managed. Issues have been raised about the megadepartment, and the fact that the two most important positions within Tourism WA are part-time has been a major issue, not necessarily including the director general of the department. The issue lies at the feet of the McGowan government and the Premier's decisions.

Another issue raised about the way this portfolio has been managed is the sale of the naming rights of the new Perth Stadium. This stops every sport and events commentator from spruiking and promoting our capital city in national and international broadcasts.

Mr P. Papalia: That's not true.

Ms L. METTAM: Yes. According to the Tourism Council’s economic analysis, the Perth Stadium investment has the potential to attract more than 65 000 new visitors and deliver more than \$29 million and 1 300 jobs to the state’s economy through tourism each year, so there is great value in the Perth Stadium investment as a tourism asset. It is a massive contribution to tourism. Again, this investment in infrastructure was consistently criticised by the WA Labor opposition. Did things not change when it came into government, especially at the photo opportunity? Members opposite were all lined up for the photo, talking about how wonderful the tourism asset is, and it is. This investment and what it means for visitations and events that can be hosted at Perth Stadium represents exciting things for Western Australia, in particular the Chelsea match coming up, the Bledisloe Cup —

Dr A.D. Buti: interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: Yes; they are great events secured by the then CEO of Tourism WA, Gwyn Dolphin, who was also sacked by this government 11 months into his contract. Stephen Wood’s sacking raises questions about what sort of thought process goes into a decision to sack a director general of a department. As I understand it, questions asked in the upper house recently by a One Nation member stated that the minister thought the director general was very well qualified for his role as director general of the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation. It was also confirmed that the contract had recently been extended to 2021, so it sounds as though the government has made a kneejerk reaction here as a distraction from the real issue. The real issue is what the government has done by relegating tourism to a mega-department and making the CEO for Tourism WA a part-time position and retaining the leading figure in marketing and partnerships as a part-time position.

Yesterday, the Minister for Tourism was asked about international visitors who study in Western Australia. Although that was an issue that the minister campaigned on during the election—to bring a proportion of international visitors up from 6.8 per cent to what should be 10 per cent.

Mr P. Papalia: Students, not visitors!

Ms L. METTAM: Students, and potentially visitors. Although that was highlighted by the WA Labor opposition, it was also recognised at that time and during the mining boom years that there was a great challenge in attracting international students because of a shortage in student accommodation. Obviously, accommodation during the boom years was very expensive. A lot of those issues are being addressed. We now have a healthy number of hotel rooms available. In some respects, it is a concerning number. Capacity is not an issue anymore and affordability is now there. One of the very first decisions made by the incoming McGowan government was, as a result of its so-called jobs policy, to remove Perth from the regional skilled migration scheme and to change the state skills list from 178 jobs to just 18 jobs. That is the lowest of any other state. By comparison, South Australia—a competing tourism state—has 150 jobs on its occupation list, Tasmania has 160 jobs and Queensland has 45. As a result of this so-called jobs policy, we have seen a 12.5 per cent decline in student visas following the decision to remove those incentives.

An article in *The Australian* on 31 January entitled, “Student slump hits west while nation booms” written by Victoria Laurie, Tim Dodd and John Ross states —

The \$30 billion international education industry has warned that Western Australia is losing large numbers of valuable overseas students to other states following last year’s decision by the incoming McGowan Labor government to slash migration incentives.

...

Education agents are now recommending to migration-focused students that they study in South Australia, the Northern Territory or Tasmania, where they can still get the five-point bonus.

The article quotes Phil Honeywood, chief executive of the International Education Association of Australia, who states —

“SA, the NT and Tasmania all celebrated when the WA government withdrew the regional migration points,”

It continues —

Robynne Walsh, he principal of Perth English language school Phoenix Academy, said the government decision had severe consequences. “It is a concern to many in the sector and it’s been devastating because Adelaide is still on the list,”

It was acknowledged in the article that the McGowan government had allocated \$2 million over five years to boost WA’s market share, but compared to the states that are creating more incentives such as Queensland, which has allocated \$37 million over four years and Victoria, which has set aside \$35 million, that is a drop in the ocean. That is a consistent message and response to the policies of the McGowan government. Again, that headline was “Student slump hits west while nation booms”.

The Minister for Tourism has spoken much about the value of these international visitors, with one student representing five international visits. Again, growing international tourism was a big focus of WA Labor in opposition. We asked questions regarding this matter in this place yesterday and the minister said that he had no responsibility over that portfolio. Given the clear connection between tourism and international education and that WA Labor made this issue such a focus at the last election, I would have thought that the minister would be well able to answer any questions regarding the impact of this policy on tourism in this state. Those are a few issues I have raised. I note that the member for Riverton, the Leader of the Opposition, also wants to speak.

First and foremost, the minister has misled the house about tourism figures. We have seen the impacts of the machinery-of-government changes, which have left consistent concerns across industry about who is leading tourism at a departmental level in the state. A professional in state development was made a scapegoat for not being able to lead an entirely different area of responsibility, which is promoting visitors to the state. We have seen another national headline about Western Australian international student figures plummeting while there has been growth in every other state. With those remarks I will go back to the original motion—which I do not have in front of me. Again, I raise concern about the management of the tourism portfolio under the McGowan government.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Tourism) [6.36 pm]: I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr P. PAPALIA: That was an interesting contribution from the member for Vasse. I would make one observation. If a member is going to move a motion to condemn a minister, it might be nice if what she says reflects the motion. I notice the member lost the motion at the end and could not find what she had moved, but I will help her out and reread what she said. The motion stated —

This house condemns the Minister for Tourism for his gross mismanagement of the tourism portfolio, including intentionally misleading the people of Western Australia on falling international visitor numbers, blaming bureaucrats for his poor decision-making and his range of policies that are causing long-term damage to this important sector.

As far as I can recall the member contributed not one shred of evidence to support her claim. I will go through them individually. The first one is “including intentionally misleading the people of Western Australia” —

Point of Order

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Excuse me, minister. Do we have a point of order?

Ms L. METTAM: I do not know whether it is a point of order, but I will give it a go! This is private members' time. We attempted to debate this matter with the government during suspension of standing orders; now the government has been taking up our time by debating the matter for the last 20 minutes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I take your point, but you would want the minister to respond in normal circumstances to an MPI; the minister is giving you a response.

Debate Resumed

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am allowed to respond, member. You have made an attack on me. You have accused me! You have condemned me publicly, member!

Ms L. Mettam: You didn't respond in question time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: You have condemned me publicly. It is only fair that I respond. There has been a ferocious attack on my integrity and I feel obligated to respond as I am allowed to, as I am entitled to, and, normally, as I would be expected to.

With respect to the points that the member has made—she has left the chamber! I place on the record that the member who has made such an outrageous attack on my professional capacity as a minister has left the chamber.

Point of Order

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Time and again the Speaker has ruled that members on this side of the chamber cannot cast aspersions or make reflections on members moving about the chamber and leaving the chamber. I suspect the minister is about to do so and I seek your intervention.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, I cannot rule on a point of order if it has not been made, member for Dawesville. Good try, but, no, not tonight.

Debate Resumed

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am sure that the member who made that outrageous accusation against my integrity and then left the chamber will come back shortly, because it would be a cowardly act to make such an attack and to leave the chamber and not enable me to respond to her personally. Nevertheless, I put that on the record.

A number of claims have been made, the first of which is that apparently I misled the people of Western Australia on falling international visitor numbers. I will read the entire extract from *Hansard*, to which the member has referred on a number of occasions when claiming that I misled Parliament. This is what I said on 14 March in response to the member's question, at page 725 —

When we took office, the first industry forum the Premier hosted was with the tourism industry. He sought its advice as to the key issues it confronted. It said things were diabolical. That was in March last year. Things were diabolical.

Mr I.C. Blayney: Things got worse.

Mr P. PAPALIA: This was last year, member, when we won the election in March and you had just lost government —

The industry requested that we take some action to immediately try to bring people from interstate and overseas to this state, and to take action to re-establish a marketing presence on the east coast, which had been shut down six years earlier by the previous government. We did those things. In September, we asked Tourism WA to bring forward and run campaigns in China, Singapore, Malaysia and the east coast to draw people to Western Australia. As a consequence, between September and December —

I said 52 417; I did get that wrong. I guess the member can accuse me of misleading because it was 52 147. It was a slip of the tongue and I got my numbers around the wrong way —

52 417 more people arrived in Western Australia than had arrived over the same period 12 months earlier.

That is an absolute fact. There is nothing contradictory there. I have not even referenced international visitor numbers alone. The member was incapable, clearly, of reading *Hansard*, which is very clear. I talked both of international numbers and interstate numbers, with reference to the 52 147 additional visitors.

Ms L. Mettam: You said additional.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is 52 147. I got the number wrong. It is 52 147 not 52 417. I got that wrong. The member may correct me on that, but I talked about international and interstate visitors. It was not international numbers alone—that is the first point. The second point, for the member's edification, is that for campaigns run on the east coast, when a booking is made electronically through booking agencies, that equals a visitor. When Tourism WA refers to bookings, it means visitors. If the member wants me to arrange a briefing with Tourism WA to explain it to her, I can do that. Louise Scott from Tourism WA will tell her that—bookings equals visitors. When it is an electronic campaign and we track —

Ms L. Mettam: You said additional visitors.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is additional to the 12 months. I will read it to the member again. This is what I said, from *Hansard*; I am reading the whole *Hansard*, not what the person in the member's office might have extracted and put into her briefing notes. I said —

As a consequence, between September and December, 52 417 —

I said 52 417, but it is 52 147 —

more people arrived in Western Australia than had arrived over the same period 12 months earlier.

Who does the member think I sought that advice from?

Ms L. Mettam: You said the numbers increased by 52 417.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, this is the *Hansard*, it is not what the member thinks I said.

Ms L. Mettam: This is the *Hansard*!

Mr P. PAPALIA: Member, I am going to read from *Hansard* one more time my response to your question of 14 March. At the end of my response I talked about multiple campaigns, both interstate and overseas, in direct response to requests from the tourism industry, and I ended by saying—I am quoting myself, for about the fourth time —

As a consequence, between September and December, 52 417 —

I said that; it is actually 52 147; my staff corrected me on that —

more people arrived in Western Australia than had arrived over the same period 12 months earlier.

I understand that the member might have misread that and assumed that I said something I did not, but that is what I said, so I was not misleading anybody; actually, the member was misleading Parliament when she accused me of misleading. That is the first point. If the member wants me to confirm that visitors equal bookings, I can happily arrange a briefing for her from the marketing manager at Tourism WA.

I go now to the next accusation: of blaming bureaucrats for poor decision-making. When have I ever attributed the departure of the former director general of the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation to these statistics or any failures in the tourism portfolio? The only person —

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Deputy Speaker, I am not seeking interjections. The member for Vasse can, but not the member for Dawesville.

When have I ever attributed the departure of the former director general of the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation to these statistics, which are old statistics from December 2016 to December 2017? The only person in Western Australia that I am aware of who has linked the departure of the director general of the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation to any perceived or claimed failure with regard to tourism statistics is the shadow Minister for Tourism. The member for Vasse is the only person. The member put out a media release claiming that the former director general had been scapegoated over these statistics. I never made that observation, I never made that claim, and I never would. In fact, part of the reason the member did not hear about any perceived shortcomings of the former director general with regard to my portfolios was that I would never do that until the time of his departure. Any considerations around claims of problems within the department, or my relationship with the agency, or the relationship of the director general with the industry, I would keep to be discussed internally between me and the government. I would never say publicly what the member for Vasse has said in a media release. I would never have made that claim. She is the only one who has. I do not know whether it was the member or someone in her office—perhaps the work experience kid—who created with a crayon a graph that the member then tweeted to suggest that there had been a massive collapse in international visitor numbers. The fact that the member put that out and a journalist, without looking into the detail, assumed it to be correct and then wrote an article about it, does not make it true. Does the member know how far the international visitor numbers actually fell between 2016 and 2017? Does she know what the percentage drop was? I am about to let her know. It was 0.8 per cent.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is enough yelling. Hansard is not able to hear who is yelling louder, so can we please just confine this debate to the minister? If he wishes to take an interjection, member for Vasse, that is his preference; that is fine, but it is best not to yell while he is talking.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker, I apologise—I was inviting interjections, but I will not now, because we do not have much time. I have only got 10 minutes, and I need to use every second of that 10 minutes.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not inviting interjections; I am speaking through you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Certainly, go ahead, minister.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The fall in international visitor numbers, about which many claims have been made and about which much outrage has been affected on the other side of the chamber, in the year that they are talking about—we were not in government for the entirety of that year—the difference between 2016 and 2017 was 0.8 per cent. That was the difference in international visitation to Western Australia. It was flatlined—it was not good. We knew that, because we inherited a basket case. The previous government neglected tourism.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not inviting interjections. I do not have long; I need every second. Let us analyse the claim that has been made. Firstly, falling international visitor numbers had actually flatlined. Who was responsible for the scale of the notional fall? Let me address that. The way the statistics work, no new statistics have been released this year.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I call you for the first time. I have warned you.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your protection. I need to explain, because it is not well known, and there has been quite ignorant commentary from the other side of the chamber about statistics. No new tourism data has been released this year—nothing new. What was released was the data from December 2016 to the end of December 2017. It is three months late; in fact it is almost four months by the time it gets out into the public domain. It is extraordinary that we should pay a company through Tourism Research Australia.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will continue to reflect on the nature of the responsibility for the flatline in tourism numbers. There was no fall in international tourism numbers for the period being referred to. The period was December 2016 to December 2017. Four months of that 12 months was during the Barnett government. For a further three months, the structure was identical to the one that we inherited, because the change happened on 1 July. For a further three months beyond that—a total of 10 months—the same failed tourism strategy existed.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Deputy Speaker, I am not inviting interjections.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville, you are on a call already. I will be very disappointed to give you another one.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Deputy Speaker, I would appreciate your protection; we are running out of time.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! Member for Dawesville, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Ten months of the 12 months was under the failed Tourism 2020 strategy devised, implemented—confirmed as having failed by the Auditor General in November last year—and the responsibility of the previous government. The budget that we handed down in September enabled us to change tactics. It freed up funding and enabled us to inject funding into a campaign that focused on, as I said earlier, Singapore, Malaysia, China and the east coast. That resulted in 52 147 additional visitors to the state between September and December.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That was confirmed by Tourism WA, which knows what it is talking about, as opposed to the member for Vasse. The final observation I will make I need to reflect on because the member for Vasse referred to Etihad Airways, an interesting subject to raise during the debate. There was, sadly, a report made as a consequence of a significant commercial challenge that Etihad is facing around the world right now. It made a \$1.9 billion or so loss last year. It is contracting its services all around the world and as a consequence it will not be flying to Perth anymore. We heard the member for Vasse extolling the virtues of the flight and suggesting that somehow tourism in the state will suffer due to less inbound seating capacity. Had the member for Vasse listened a little longer to the radio show, she would have heard me say that there are two other airlines servicing the Middle East flying to Perth, Qatar Airways and Emirates, and we will retain those airlines flying from the Middle East. Qatar Airways —

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is how you say it.

Several members interjected.

Ms M.M. Quirk: He's probably been there, unlike you.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have been there.

Next month A380s will commence that route by Qatar Airways. As a consequence, there will be an initial thousand seats a week flown by that airline. When we couple that with the direct flights from Qantas and even after the Etihad flights cease, there will be 116 672 additional seats flying into Perth next year as opposed to last year. Even last year when we had Etihad, once it stops as a consequence of the additional seating on other airlines, fortunately for Western Australia we will have 116 672 additional seats servicing the Perth market.

Mr I.C. Blayney interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Geraldton!

Mr P. PAPALIA: We do not have a shortage of capacity flying from the Middle East. I do not like it when airlines choose through their own commercial reasons to cease flying, but that is not where we are targeting direct flights. That is not the location that we are pursuing to establish ourselves as the western gateway. We already have a reputation as the western gateway there. We are well serviced by other airlines from the Middle East. We are focused laser-like on seeking additional direct flights from China. As we speak, the chairman of Tourism of Western Australia is leading a delegation. I shared this with the courtyard last night. The chairman of Tourism WA, an excellent man, Nathan Harding, is leading a team from Perth Airport and Tourism WA. The member asked who will be negotiating direct flights. I can tell her right now that the chairman of Tourism WA is in China negotiating with China Eastern Airlines. He has with him the aviation development managers from Perth Airport and Tourism WA. They will come back to us, I hope, with proposals from China Eastern to commence direct flights in the near term. We will negotiate around its response.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I have been struggling to hear the minister over the conversations on my right. Please keep it a bit lower.

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister called the point of order not from his chair. I ask that you bring him to order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It was not a point of order. I was not addressing it as a point of order.

Debate Resumed

The SPEAKER: Given the time, I interrupt this business.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

ROAD SAFETY — DRINK AND DRUG-DRIVING OFFENCES

2475. Mr P.A. Katsambanis to the Minister for Police; Road Safety:

- (1) Listed by region, how many people have been charged with drug driving offences since 1 July 2017?
- (2) Listed by region, how many people have been charged with drink driving offences since 1 July 2017?

Mrs M.H. Roberts replied:

The Western Australian Police Force advise the following;

- (1) The number of unique persons charged with drug driving offences from 1 July 2017 to 31 January 2018 inclusive, is 1,111 in the metropolitan region, and 649 in regional areas. In addition to this, there were 10 people in metropolitan Perth, and 6 people in regional areas charged with a combination of drug and drink driving offences.
- (2) The number of unique persons charged with drink driving offences from 1 July 2017 to 31 January 2018 inclusive, where the location of the offence is recorded, is 3,239 in metropolitan Perth, and 1,945 in regional areas. In addition to this, there were a number of infringements where the location could be inferred from the Station or unit of the issuing officer. There were 248 infringements of this type in metropolitan Perth, and 250 in regional areas. There were 708 infringements where the location was not able to be ascertained.

**MINISTER FOR POLICE — STAFF — THIRD-PARTY PROVIDED ADMISSION
AND HOSPITALITY — OPTUS STADIUM**

2489. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the Minister for Police; Road Safety:

Have any staff (above PSGA level 7 or equivalent) in the Minister's office accepted any free admission or corporate hospitality from any third party or organisations (including government departments, agencies or government trading enterprises) to any of the following events at Optus Stadium:

- (a) Gillette One-Day International, 28 January 2018 and if so:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) What staffer attended and did they take any guests;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the staffer submit an "Request to Attend Event" form to DPC and if so, on what date; and
- (b) AFLW – Fremantle v Collingwood, 10 February 2018 and if so:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) What staffer attended and did they take any guests;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the staffer submit an "Request to Attend Event" form to DPC and if so, on what date?

Mrs M.H. Roberts replied:

- (a) No.
 - (i)–(iv) Not applicable.
- (b) No.
 - (i)–(iv) Not applicable.

**MINISTER FOR POLICE — THIRD-PARTY PROVIDED ADMISSION
AND HOSPITALITY — OPTUS STADIUM**

2506. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the Minister for Police; Road Safety:

Has the Minister accepted any free admission or corporate hospitality from any third party or organisations (including government departments, agencies or government trading enterprises) to any of the following events at Optus Stadium:

- (a) Gillette One-Day International, 28 January 2018 and if so:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) Did the Minister take guests and if so, who;

- (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
- (iv) Did the Minister attend or get picked up from this event by a government owned or leased vehicle driven by an Executive Transport Officer or staffer; and
- (b) AFLW – Fremantle v Collingwood, 10 February 2018 and if so:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) Did the Minister take guests and if so, who;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the Minister attend or get picked up from this event by a government owned or leased vehicle driven by an Executive Transport Officer or staffer?

Mrs M.H. Roberts replied:

- (a) No.
 - (i)–(iv) Not applicable.
- (b) No.
 - (i)–(iv) Not applicable.

MINISTER FOR POLICE — STAFF — THIRD-PARTY PROVIDED ADMISSION
AND HOSPITALITY — PERTH ARENA

2523. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the Minister for Police; Road Safety:

Have any staff (above PSGA level 7 or equivalent) in the Minister’s office accepted any free admission or corporate hospitality from any third party or organisations (including government departments, agencies or government trading enterprises) to any of the following events at Perth Arena:

- (a) Seinfeld Live, 4 August 2017 and if so:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) What staffer attended and did they take any guests;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the staffer submit an “Request to Attend Event” form to DPC and if so, on what date;
- (b) Alice Cooper, 17 October 2017 and if so:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) What staffer attended and did they take any guests;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the staffer submit an “Request to Attend Event” form to DPC and if so, on what date;
- (c) Shawn Mendes, 6 December 2017:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) What staffer attended and did they take any guests;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the staffer submit an “Request to Attend Event” form to DPC and if so, on what date;
- (d) The Weeknd, 14 December 2017:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) What staffer attended and did they take any guests;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the staffer submit an “Request to Attend Event” form to DPC and if so, on what date;
- (e) Mariah Carey, 5 February 2018:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) What staffer attended and did they take any guests;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the staffer submit an “Request to Attend Event” form to DPC and if so, on what date; and

- (f) Ultimate Fighting Championship, 11 February 2018:
- (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) What staffer attended and did they take any guests;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the staffer submit an “Request to Attend Event” form to DPC and if so, on what date?

Mrs M.H. Roberts replied:

- (a) No.
(i)–(iv) Not applicable.
- (b) No.
(i)–(iv) Not applicable.
- (c) No.
(i)–(iv) Not applicable.
- (d) No.
(i)–(iv) Not applicable.
- (e) No.
(i)–(iv) Not applicable.
- (f) No.
(i)–(iv) Not applicable.

**MINISTER FOR POLICE — THIRD-PARTY PROVIDED ADMISSION
AND HOSPITALITY — PERTH ARENA**

2540. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the Minister for Police; Road Safety:

Has the Minister accepted any free admission or corporate hospitality from any third party or organisations (including government departments, agencies or government trading enterprises) to any of the following events at Perth Arena:

- (a) Seinfeld Live, 4 August 2017 and if so:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) Did the Minister take guests and if so, who;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the Minister attend or get picked up from this event by a government owned or leased vehicle driven by an Executive Transport Officer or staffer;
- (b) Alice Cooper, 17 October 2017 and if so:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) Did the Minister take guests and if so, who;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the Minister attend or get picked up from this event by a government owned or leased vehicle driven by an Executive Transport Officer or staffer;
- (c) Shawn Mendes, 6 December 2017:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) Did the Minister take guests and if so, who;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the Minister attend or get picked up from this event by a government owned or leased vehicle driven by an Executive Transport Officer or staffer;
- (d) The Weeknd, 14 December 2017:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) Did the Minister take guests and if so, who;

- (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
- (iv) Did the Minister attend or get picked up from this event by a government owned or leased vehicle driven by an Executive Transport Officer or staffer;
- (e) Mariah Carey, 5 February 2018:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) Did the Minister take guests and if so, who;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the Minister attend or get picked up from this event by a government owned or leased vehicle driven by an Executive Transport Officer or staffer; and
- (f) Ultimate Fighting Championship, 11 February 2018:
 - (i) What was the third party or organisation which provided the hospitality or admission;
 - (ii) Did the Minister take guests and if so, who;
 - (iii) What was the estimated value of the hospitality/admission; and
 - (iv) Did the Minister attend or get picked up from this event by a government owned or leased vehicle driven by an Executive Transport Officer or staffer?

Mrs M.H. Roberts replied:

- (a) No.
(i)–(iv) Not applicable.
- (b) No.
(i)–(iv) Not applicable.
- (c) No.
(i)–(iv) Not applicable.
- (d) No.
(i)–(iv) Not applicable.
- (e) No.
(i)–(iv) Not applicable.
- (f) No.
(i)–(iv) Not applicable.

MINISTER FOR POLICE — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

2708. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the Minister for Police; Road Safety:

I refer to each department, agency and Government Trading Enterprise under the Minister's control, and ask what was the total number of employees engaged in the following areas in 2016:

- (a) Media relations;
- (b) Publicity;
- (c) Public relations;
- (d) Communications;
- (e) Strategic communications;
- (f) Marketing;
- (g) Corporate affairs; and
- (h) Speechwriting?

Mrs M.H. Roberts replied:

- (a)–(h) There is no standard definition of the titles referred to in the question, nor standard job title nomenclature that enables accurate or reliable provision of the information sought. Additionally, there are many public sector positions that have, or might be interpreted as having, a small component of the activities referred to. For example, there are many positions within the public sector where staff would occasionally be required to prepare speeches.

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

2709. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Environment; Disability Services:

I refer to each department, agency and Government Trading Enterprise under the Minister's control, and ask what was the total number of employees engaged in the following areas in 2016:

- (a) Media relations;
- (b) Publicity;
- (c) Public relations;
- (d) Communications;
- (e) Strategic communications;
- (f) Marketing;
- (g) Corporate affairs; and
- (h) Speechwriting?

Mr R.R. Whitby replied:

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 2712.

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

2726. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Environment; Disability Services:

I refer to each department, agency and Government Trading Enterprise under the Minister's control, and ask what is the current total number of employees engaged in:

- (a) Media relations;
- (b) Publicity;
- (c) Public relations;
- (d) Communications;
- (e) Strategic communications;
- (f) Marketing;
- (g) Corporate affairs; and
- (h) Speechwriting?

Mr R.R. Whitby replied:

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 2712.

MINISTER FOR POLICE — CGM COMMUNICATIONS — CONSULTATIONS

2805. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the Minister for Police; Road Safety:

Since 1 January 2017 have the public affairs firm CGM Communications been engaged by any government department, agency or government trading enterprise in the Minister's control, and if so:

- (a) for what purpose has the firm been engaged; and
- (b) what is the total cost of each consultancy?

Mrs M.H. Roberts replied:

Engagements of public relations firms are captured in the "Report on Consultants Engaged By Government" tabled regularly in each House of Parliament.

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT — CGM COMMUNICATIONS — CONSULTATIONS

2806. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Environment; Disability Services:

Since 1 January 2017 have the public affairs firm CGM Communications been engaged by any government department, agency or government trading enterprise in the Minister's control, and if so:

- (a) for what purpose has the firm been engaged; and
- (b) what is the total cost of each consultancy?

Mr R.R. Whitby replied:

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 2809.

MINISTER FOR POLICE — HAWKER BRITTON — CONSULTATIONS

2822. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the Minister for Police; Road Safety:

Since 1 January 2017 have the public affairs firm Hawker Britton been engaged by any government department, agency or government trading enterprise in the Minister's control, and if so:

- (a) for what purpose has the firm been engaged; and
- (b) what is the total cost of each consultancy?

Mrs M.H. Roberts replied:

Engagements of public relations firms are captured in the "Report on Consultants Engaged By Government" tabled regularly in each House of Parliament.

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT — HAWKER BRITTON — CONSULTATIONS

2823. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Environment; Disability Services:

Since 1 January 2017 have the public affairs firm Hawker Britton been engaged by any government department, agency or government trading enterprise in the Minister's control, and if so:

- (a) for what purpose has the firm been engaged; and
- (b) what is the total cost of each consultancy?

Mr R.R. Whitby replied:

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 2826.
